

JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR  
KE KIA'ĀINA



RYAN I. YAMANE  
DIRECTOR  
KA LUNA HO'OKELE

JOSEPH CAMPOS II  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR  
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

STATE OF HAWAII  
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAI'I  
**DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES**  
KA 'OIHANA MĀLAMA LAWELAWE KANAKA  
Office of the Director  
P. O. Box 339  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

TRISTA SPEER  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR  
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

February 15, 2026

TO: The Honorable Representative Cory M. Chun, Chair  
House Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems

FROM: Ryan I. Yamane, Director

SUBJECT: **HB 2208 HD1 – RELATING TO FOOD SECURITY.**

Hearing: February 18, 2026, 9:30 a.m.  
Conference Room 325, State Capitol

**DEPARTMENT'S POSITION:** The Department of Human Services (DHS) appreciates the intent of the bill and provides comments. This bill establishes and appropriates funds for the Hawaii Farm to Families Program under DHS to alleviate food shortages in the State. DHS respectfully requests that the appropriation not replace or reduce budget priorities identified in the executive budget.

Most recently, to address the impacts of the 2025 federal government shutdown, DHS provided funds to the Hawaii Foodbank and its network to purchase and distribute food. Previously, DHS has also facilitated grants-in-aid appropriated under Chapter 42F, Hawaii Revised Statutes, to community food bank organizations.

The Department recognizes that residents, including those who receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, also rely on community organizations for food and other assistance to meet nutritional and other needs not met by government programs.

However, at this time, DHS is focused on implementing programmatic changes required by the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA), Public Law 119-21, and does not currently have sufficient administrative capacity and resources to initiate and oversee a new program.

If the bill continues through the session, the Department requests an extended effective date to draft and adopt administrative rules that would allow grant submissions under this new program and to acquire the resources needed to implement this measure.

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

**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**

**BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS**

**WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 2026  
9:30 AM  
CONFERENCE ROOM 325**

**HOUSE BILL NO. 2208, HD1  
RELATING TO FOOD SECURITY**

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

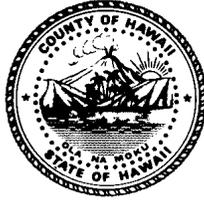
Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 2208, HD1 that establishes and appropriates funds in the form of grants for the Hawaii Farm to Families Program under the Department of Human Services to alleviate food shortages in the State. Requires reports to the Legislature before the Regular Sessions of 2027 and 2028. The Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity (Department) supports this measure and acknowledges the comments by the Department of Human Services (DHS) requesting resources to implement the Hawaii Farm to Families Program.

The Department agrees with the Committee report findings that food insecurity is a significant and persistent challenge for households across the state and disproportionately affects children and other vulnerable populations and recognizes this bill addresses the need with an expedited process allowing funds to be distributed by DHS to the eligible agencies.

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

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

February 13, 2026

HEARING BEFORE THE  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

WEDNESDAY, February 18, 2026  
9:30 AM  
CONFERENCE ROOM 325

TESTIMONY ON HB 2208 HD1 Relating to Food Security

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

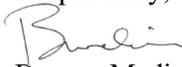
I am Benson Medina, Director of the Department of Research and Development, County of Hawai'i. One of the agricultural objectives of this department is to support collaboration, innovation, resource development, and programmatic sustainability throughout the food system to reduce food waste, improve 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 HB2208 HD1**, to establish and appropriate funds in the form of grants for the Hawai'i Farm to Families Program under the Department of Human Services to alleviate food shortages in the State.

Hawai'i County faces the highest rates of food insecurity in the State, with 43% of Hawai'i County households reporting food insecurity in a 2025 report by Hawai'i Foodbank. The Food Basket (TFB), Hawai'i Island's food bank is at the forefront of Farm to Family initiatives, pioneering efforts to connect local farmers with communities in need. In 2025, our department collaborated with TFB to award \$500,000 in federally-funded grants to 29 food access organizations. This investment prioritized projects that increase cold, dry, or freezer storage, as well as equipment and supplies, expanding the capacity of food access programs around the island to receive and store fresh Farm to Families produce.

The Farm to Families program improves emergency food access, boosts local agriculture, and strengthens Hawai'i's food system during the ongoing economic crisis that is affecting so many families across the state. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in **SUPPORT of HB2208 HD1**.

Respectfully,

  
Benson Medina  
Director

**LATE**

**HB-2208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 9:44:42 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/18/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michele McLean	Office of Maui County Council Chair Alice Lee	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I serve as Maui County Council Chair Alice Lee's representative on the Board of the Maui Food Bank, and ask for your support of this important measure. With our housing crisis being foremost in everyone's minds, we cannot fail to also address our food security crisis -- which includes 34 percent of our keiki experiencing food insecurity!

HB2208, HD1 -- the Farm to Families Bill -- is a win-win-win-win: it provides access to fresh food for food insecure families; it invests in local farmers and growers; it strengthens our community food systems; and it improves our health and resiliency.

- If we invest in local agriculture, we reduce our dependence on imported goods and thus create more resilient and sustainable food systems.

- If we provide a steady market for local produce, then farmers can plan for future growth.

- If we provide healthy food options, we provide essential nutrients to individuals, thus fighting hunger and promoting long-term health and wellness.

Please give HB2208, HD1 your whole-hearted support!

Mahalo for your consideration.

Michele McLean

Office of Maui County Council Chair Alice Lee and Board Member of the Maui Food Bank

LATE \*Testimony submitted late may not be considered by the Committee for decision making purposes.

OFFICE OF CLIMATE CHANGE SUSTAINABILITY AND RESILIENCY

KE KE'ENA LOLI ANIAU MĀLAMA 'ĀINA A ME KE OLA LOA  
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

650 SOUTH KING STREET, 11<sup>th</sup> FLOOR • HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813  
PHONE: (808) 768-2277 • EMAIL: [resilientoahu@honolulu.gov](mailto:resilientoahu@honolulu.gov) • WEBSITE: [resilientoahu.org](http://resilientoahu.org)

**LATE**

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 HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS  
**Wednesday, February 18, 2026, 9:30 AM**  
**Conference RM 325 and Via Videoconference**

TO: Rep. Cory Chun, Chair, Rep. Matthias Kusch, Vice Chair, and Members of the  
Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems

RE: SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 2208, HD1, RELATING TO FOOD SECURITY

The City and County of Honolulu's ("City") Office of Climate Change, Sustainability, and Resiliency ("Resilience Office") **supports** House Bill 2208, HD1, which establishes and appropriates funds in the form of grants for the Hawai'i Farm to Families Program to alleviate food shortages in the state.

Food insecurity across the state remains at crisis levels, with continued pandemic-level demand at food banks now compounded by high living costs, climate-related disruptions, and uncertainty in federal support. These conditions highlight the need for sustainable, locally rooted solutions that strengthen both daily food access and long-term resilience.

This measure complements ongoing City efforts to build a more resilient food system, including development of a first-ever O'ahu Food Systems Plan and the O'ahu Good Food Program, which supports institutions in increasing local food procurement. Strengthening food banks' ability to purchase and distribute local products helps reinforce these broader market shifts while directly serving communities most in need.

Investing in Hawai'i-grown food reduces reliance on imported goods and vulnerable global supply chains, and improves our ability to respond to disaster while ensuring families have access to fresh, nutritious, and culturally-relevant food.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in **support** of HB2208, HD1.



## 'Ahahui o nā Kauka

677 Ala Moana Blvd., Suite 1015

Honolulu HI 96813

Phone 808.548.0270

E-mail [huikauka@gmail.com](mailto:huikauka@gmail.com)

### 2025-2026 Advocacy Committee

Marcus Kāwika Iwane, MD  
President

Kapono Chong-Hanssen, MD  
Vice-President & Advocacy Co-Chair

Kaohimānu Dang-Akiona, MD  
Advocacy Co-Chair

Kara Wong Ramsey, MD  
Treasurer

Kapua Medeiros, MD

Natalie Young-Albanese, MD

Jordan Lee, MD

February 13, 2026

### COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

Rep. Cory M. Chun, Chair

Rep. Matthias Kusch, Vice Chair

Rep. Kirstin Kahaloa

Rep. Sean Quinlan

Rep. Nicole E. Lowen

Rep. Lauren Matsumoto

Rep. Amy A. Perruso

### Group Testimony in Support of HB2208HD1 RELATING TO FOOD SECURITY

Aloha,

'Ahahui o nā Kauka is an organization of Native Hawaiian physicians dedicated to the health of the people of Hawai'i and Native Hawaiians in particular. We are writing in support of HB2208 Farm to Families aimed to alleviate food shortages in the State of Hawai'i. With 1 in 3 households in Hawai'i facing food insecurity, including 34% of all children, it is critical that we take action to ensure that everyone in our community has access to safe and healthy food. This bill is a win-win. It will provide critical access to fresh, culturally relevant foods for food insecure families, while also investing in local farmers and growers, who are critical to strengthening our community food systems and creating a healthier, more resilient Hawai'i.

The partnership between local farms and food organizations benefits families in our communities and our economy by:

1. **Strengthening Hawai'i's Food Supply Chain:** By investing in local agriculture, we reduce our dependence on imported goods, creating a more resilient and sustainable food system for Hawai'i.
2. **Supporting Local Farmers:** The bill offers a direct benefit to Hawai'i's agricultural sector, providing a steady and fair market for local produce. Farmers can plan for future growth knowing their products will feed their neighbors in need.
3. **Enhancing Nutritional Access:** Fresh, local produce provides essential nutrients to individuals and families who may otherwise lack access to healthy food options. This not only fights hunger but also promotes long-term health and wellness in our communities.

We know that food insecurity and access to healthy and culturally relevant foods is a fundamental determinant of health that impacts overall Maui Ola (health and wellness). Today, Hawai'i relies on external markets and imports 85-90% of food, and thus Hawai'i's people are no longer connected to food sources, how it's processed or know where the food comes from. We also know that people who face challenges accessing enough food also face challenges affording adequate housing, healthcare, transportation and other basic needs. Studies show that among those experiencing food insecurity, over 60% described either delaying filling prescriptions or taking less medicine in order to save money.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to our shared vision of a thriving, food-secure Hawai'i. We are deeply grateful for your consideration of this important legislation.



Email: [communications@ulupono.com](mailto:communications@ulupono.com)

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SYSTEMS  
Wednesday, February 18, 2026 — 9:30 a.m.

**Ulupono Initiative supports HB 2208 HD1, Relating to Food Security**

Dear Chair Chun and Members of the Committee:

My name is Micah Munekata, and I am the Vice President of Government Affairs at Ulupono Initiative. We are a Hawai'i-focused impact investment firm that strives to improve the quality of life throughout the islands by helping our communities become more resilient and self-sufficient through locally produced food, renewable energy and clean transportation choices, and better management of freshwater resources.

**Ulupono supports HB 2208 HD1**, which establishes and appropriates funds in the form of grants for the Hawai'i Farm to Families Program under the Department of Human Services to alleviate food shortages in the State.

Over the last few years, one of the most pressing issues for many local families has been food insecurity. With many out of work and surviving on government unemployment support, communities have relied on the efforts of food banks and local food producers to meet their basic need to eat.

In response to the COVID pandemic, federal monies injected into Hawai'i through county initiatives helped grow a local farm-to-food bank effort, in which food banks were able to purchase local products for distribution to communities in need. This effort was a win-win-win, in that local food producers had a market to sell their products when hotels and restaurants shuttered their doors, local families received fresh and nutritious food products made locally island-wide, and food banks that were struggling to purchase shelf-stable food due to nationwide shortages were rescued by Hawai'i's farmers and ranchers who provided local food to their communities.

These farm-to-food bank efforts across the state led to many important foundational relationships between local farmers, ranchers, and community feeding organizations that helped struggling communities cope with the social and economic consequences of the COVID pandemic. Unfortunately, natural disasters, food supply chain disruptions, and state emergencies have become a harsh, consistent reality for our local communities. Food banks across the state regularly organize food drives to sustain these vital community resources, which depend increasingly on donations and local producers for consistent supply. Meeting these food security challenges will require ongoing support, and strengthening partnerships between farms and food banks is a valuable investment.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully,

Micah Munekata  
Vice President of Government Affairs

*Investing in a Sustainable Hawai'i*

**HB-2208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2026 5:43:01 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/18/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
laurel brier	Kauai Climate Action Coalition	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**The Hawai'i Farm to Families Program provides access to fresh food for food insecure families, while investing in local farmers and strengthening our community food systems--resulting in less food needing to be imported. In doing so, we fight hunger and the climate crisis at the same time. It's a win WIN. Strong support for HB2208**



## CATHOLIC CHARITIES HAWAI'I

### **SUPPORT HB 2208 HD1: RELATING TO FOOD SECURITY**

TO: House Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems  
FROM: Betty Lou Larson, Legislative Liaison, Catholic Charities Hawai'i  
Hearing: Wednesday, February 18, 2026; 9:30 AM; CR 325 & Videoconference

Aloha Chair Chun, Vice Chair Kusch, and Members, Committee on Agriculture and Food Security:

My name is Betty Lou Larson from Catholic Charities Hawai'i. We are in **strong support of HB 2208 HD1**, which funds the Farm to Families Program.

With one in three households in Hawai'i experiencing food insecurity, including 34 percent of children, decisive action is needed to ensure families have consistent access to safe, nutritious, and culturally appropriate food. HB 2208 represents a meaningful and practical solution to this urgent challenge.

This measure creates a win-win opportunity for Hawai'i by simultaneously addressing hunger and strengthening our local food system. By supporting partnerships between local farmers and food organizations, the bill expands access to fresh, healthy food for food-insecure families while investing in Hawai'i's agricultural community.

Specifically, HB 2208 HD1 will:

- **Strengthen Hawai'i's food supply chain** by increasing local food production and reducing reliance on imported goods, helping to build a more resilient and sustainable food system.
- **Support local farmers and growers** by providing a reliable and fair market for locally grown produce, enabling farmers to plan for growth and stability while feeding their neighbors in need.
- **Enhance nutritional access and health outcomes** by increasing the availability of fresh, local produce for families who may otherwise lack access to healthy food options—addressing both immediate hunger and long-term wellness.

Catholic Charities Hawai'i works daily with families struggling to make ends meet. We see firsthand how access to fresh, nutritious food can stabilize households, improve health, and strengthen communities. HB 2208 HD1 aligns with these goals and reflects a thoughtful investment in both people and place. For these reasons, Catholic Charities Hawai'i **strongly supports HB2208 HD1** and respectfully urges the Committee to pass this important measure.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony. If you have any questions, please contact our Legislative Liaison, Betty Lou Larson, at (808) 527-4813.



**HB-2208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/15/2026 9:08:00 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/18/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Susan B Roberts Emery	Green Party of Hawai'i	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Chun, Vice Chair Kusch, and honorable members of committee,

My name is Susan RobertsEmery, as Co Chair of the Green Party of Hawai'i, and on behalf of the Greens we offer Very Strong Support for HB2208 HD1. As a Farm Worker myself, I see the joy that fresh foods , grown in on our local soils, brings to the members of our community. In Hawaii's we need to work harder to become a sustainable food economy, networking in our communities to bring food to all our families.

HB2208 HD1 is an important step toward reducing hunger in our islands. Efforts to invest in local agriculture and support our farmers builds Hawaii's resiliency, and avoids the greenhouse gases that would have been emitted from shipping in food. HB2208 HD1 is a triple win for our families, our farmers, and our climate!

Green Party of Hawai'i asks for your support for HB2208 HD1.

Mahalo !

Susan RobertsEmery

Green Party of Hawai'i

Paauilo



# HAWAII APPLESEED

CENTER FOR LAW & ECONOMIC JUSTICE

Testimony of the Hawai‘i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice  
Support for HB 2208 – Relating to Food Security  
House Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems  
Thursday, February 18, 2026, at 9:30AM

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Dear Chair Chun, Vice Chair Kusch, and members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of HB 2208, which would support a Farm to Families program. This bill would appropriate additional funds to alleviate food shortages in the State by ensuring fresh produce is directed to families in need.

A strong emergency food system is a critical pillar of food equity and resiliency, which is why we support instituting a Farm to Families program at the state level. This legislation would strengthen local food supply chains, from supporting the local agricultural economy to guaranteeing that nutritious food is available to more families, to reducing farm food waste.

Fresh, local produce is essential for improving community health, yet is often out of reach for many families struggling to afford life in Hawai‘i. This program would help make healthy, whole foods available to more people, thereby alleviating hunger and preventing long-term health issues like diabetes, heart disease, stroke, and depression.<sup>1</sup>

Farm to families not only strengthens Hawai‘i’s food supply chain but also provides a backup, or “safety net” market for local farmers during times of economic crisis or natural disaster. When these events strike, the emergency food system becomes a lifeline both for families seeking food, and for farmers seeking markets when tourism plummets. During the recent federal shutdown, as the state worked toward alleviating the pause in SNAP benefits, federal workers without paychecks, SNAP recipients, and those struggling to put food on the table were pointed to the food banks. Once again, the food banks and distribution partners stepped in—institutions that historically have relied almost entirely on charitable contributions.

By strengthening the partnerships between local farmers and our food banks, we are setting up a food system that is not as reliant on imports and puts back money in our local economy. Our state has set goals to double our local food production by 2030; passing this bill is one step to getting us there.<sup>2</sup>

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 2208. We are pleased that the Hawai‘i legislature is paying attention to improving food security. By investing in this initiative, we can create a stronger, healthier, and more equitable Hawai‘i for generations to come.

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<sup>1</sup> Food Research & Action Center (FRAC), “Hunger & Health: The Impact of Poverty, Food Insecurity, and Poor Nutrition on Health and Well-Being,” FRAC, December 2017, p. 1-2.

<sup>2</sup> <https://alohachallenge.hawaii.gov/pages/local-food-production-and-consumption>



## HIPHI Board

May Okihiro, MD, MS  
Chair

*John A. Burns School of Medicine,  
Department of Pediatrics*

Jennifer José Lo, MD  
Vice Chair

*Hawai'i Health Partners*

Titimaea Ta'ase, JD  
Secretary

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Jonathan Ching  
Kaiser Permanente

Tammy Ho  
*The Queen's Medical Center*

Carissa Holley, MEd  
*Hale Makua Health Services*

Joyce Lee-Ibarra, MS  
*JLI Consulting*

Misty Pacheco, DrPH  
*University of Hawai'i at Hilo*

Dina Shek, JD  
*Medical-Legal Partnership  
For Children in Hawai'i*

JoAnn Tsark, MPH  
*John A. Burns School of Medicine, Native  
Hawaiian Research Office*

Danette Wong Tomiyasu, MBA  
*Retired, Hawai'i State Department of  
Health*

## HIPHI Initiatives

Coalition for a  
Tobacco-Free Hawai'i

Community-Based Research &  
Evaluation

Community Health  
Worker Initiatives

Environmental Health

Hawai'i Climate Change and Health  
Working Group

Hawai'i Drug & Alcohol-Free Coalitions

Hawai'i Immunization Coalition

Hawai'i Oral Health Coalition

Hawai'i Public Health Training Hui

Healthy Eating + Active Living

Kūpuna Collective/Healthy Aging &  
Community Living

Public Health Workforce Development

Date: February 15, 2026

To: Rep. Cory M. Chun, Chair  
Rep. Matthias Kusch, Vice Chair  
Members of the House Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems

Re: Support for HB 2208 HD1, Relating to Food Security

Hrg: Wednesday, February 18, 2026, at 9:30 AM, Conference Room 325

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Hawai'i Public Health Institute (HIPHI)<sup>1</sup> and the Healthy Eating, Active Living<sup>2</sup> (HEAL) Coalition is in **Support of HB 2208 HD1**, which provides funds to the Farm to Families Program to address food insecurity in the State.

### Increased Demand Requires Increased Investment

The Hawai'i Food Bank's dramatic rise in food distribution – from 12.5 million pounds in 2018 to 21.2 million pounds in 2024 – reflects a growing crisis of food insecurity in our islands.<sup>3,4</sup> This 70% increase represents thousands more local families struggling to put food on their tables.

Given our state's high cost of living and dependence on imported food, we must invest in strengthening the food bank system's operations to ensure this essential service can continue supporting our island 'ohana.

### The Social Safety Net's Safety Net

Every year, 160,000 Hawai'i residents depend on \$600 million in federal SNAP benefits to put food on the table.<sup>5</sup> Yet even with this support, many families still struggle to make ends meet and must turn to food pantries to fill the gaps.

The 2025 federal government shutdown showed how delicate this dependence can be. When SNAP benefits were unavailable, our state's food banks became a lifeline for tens of thousands of families caught in a crisis beyond their control.

Until we eradicate poverty and every family has enough to eat, funding our food bank network is essential.

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<sup>1</sup> Hawai'i Public Health Institute's mission is to advance health and wellness for the people and islands of Hawai'i. We do this through expanding our understanding of what creates health of people and place, fostering partnerships, and cultivating programs to improve policies, systems, and the environments where people live, learn, work, age, and play.

<sup>2</sup> The Healthy Eating + Active Living (HEAL) Coalition, formerly known as the Obesity Prevention Task Force, was created by the legislature in 2012 and is comprised of over 60 statewide organizations. The HEAL Coalition works to make recommendations to reshape Hawai'i's school, work, community, and health care environments, making healthier lifestyles obtainable for all Hawai'i residents.

<sup>3</sup> [Hawai'i Food Bank Annual Report - 2018.](#)

<sup>4</sup> [Hawai'i Food Bank Annual Report - 2024.](#)

<sup>5</sup> [Hawai'i DHS SNAP.](#)



### **Fresh Produce in High Demand**

Hawai'i's food banks and pantries face a high demand for fresh produce, but supply falls short due to limited funding and distribution challenges.<sup>6</sup> Given the limited availability, there are hours-long lines at food distribution sites that offer fresh produce. Investing in farm-to-families programs would help to create a steady local supply of nutritious produce, improving food security and public health across the islands.

### **Local Investments Help our Economy**

A \$2 million investment in Hawai'i's food bank system creates ripple effects throughout our local economy. When we purchase from local farmers and producers, those dollars circulate within our communities rather than flowing to continental suppliers. This strengthens our agricultural sector, creates local jobs, and helps build a more resilient food system for our islands.

When families receive adequate nutrition through the food bank, they can better focus on work, education, and other activities that contribute to our economy, reducing the long-term costs associated with food insecurity.

We urge you to support farm to families to strengthen Hawai'i's emergency food network and help more families access the nutritious food they need. This investment in our food banks is an important step toward reducing hunger in our islands.

Mahalo,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nate Hix", written in a cursive style.

Nate Hix  
Director of Policy and Advocacy

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<sup>6</sup> [A guide to what Hawai'i's food banks need this season.](#) KHON



# THE FOOD BASKET

## HAWAI'I ISLAND'S FOOD BANK

### TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB2208 – FARM TO FAMILIES

February 16, 2026

EXECUTIVE  
DIRECTOR

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Honorable Members of the Committee,

KRISTIN FROST  
ALBRECHT

My name is Kristin Frost Albrecht, Executive Director of The Food Basket Inc., Hawai'i Island's Food Bank, the state-designated food bank serving Hawai'i County since 1989. Mahalo for the opportunity to offer strong support for HB2208 – Farm to Families.

BOARD OF  
DIRECTORS

**Hawai'i Island continues to experience the highest food insecurity rates in the state.** According to the 2025 State of Food Insecurity in Hawai'i Report:

ANN EBESUNO  
BOARD CHAIR

- **43% of Hawai'i Island households are food insecure, and**
- **62% of Hawai'i Island keiki experience food insecurity, levels far above the statewide average.**

MARK  
KRZYZANOWSKI  
VICE-CHAIR

These numbers reflect our daily reality: families working multiple jobs yet unable to afford basic groceries; kūpuna choosing between medication and meals; and children whose long-term health is at risk from inconsistent access to nutritious food.

DENNIS LIN  
TREASURER

HB2208 is a critical and strategic response to these urgent needs. It is a true win-win, supporting both vulnerable households and the local agricultural economy that is essential to Hawai'i's long-term resilience.

JULIA ZEE  
SECRETARY

#### Why Farm to Families Matters:

STEPHEN UEDA

- **Strengthening Hawai'i's Food Supply Chain:** Investing in local agriculture reduces dependence on imports and increases our ability to withstand disasters and supply disruptions. A farm-to-foodbank model helps build a stronger, more stable, and more resilient food system for every island.
- **Supporting Local Farmers and Growers:** HB2208 creates a predictable, mission-aligned marketplace for Hawai'i's farmers. When growers know their produce will feed their own communities, they can expand production, diversify crops, and stabilize income, strengthening rural economies across the state.
- **Improving Nutritional Access for Food-Insecure Families:** Fresh, local, and culturally relevant food is often out of reach for families facing economic hardship. This bill delivers high-quality fruits and vegetables that support long-term health while honoring Hawai'i's diverse food traditions.

WARREN LEE

SAMANTHA  
COLLINS

MAURICE  
MESSINA

CASEY HALPERN

JASON COHN



# THE FOOD BASKET

HAWAI'I ISLAND'S FOOD BANK

### Our Experience on Hawai'i Island:

For more than three decades, The Food Basket has partnered with Hawai'i Island farmers including, small, mid-sized, Native Hawaiian, and first-generation growers—to connect local agriculture to families in need. During the pandemic, these partnerships sustained farms and fed tens of thousands of residents. We have seen firsthand that when agriculture and community food organizations are resourced together, the entire island benefits.

HB2208 builds on this proven success. This legislation is not just a food bill; it is a resilience bill.

Mahalo for your leadership, service, and for your commitment to a thriving, food-secure Hawai'i. The Food Basket respectfully urges your passage of HB2208.

With deepest aloha,

Kristin Frost Albrecht  
Executive Director  
The Food Basket, Inc., Hawai'i Island's Food Bank

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DIRECTOR

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ALBRECHT

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JASON COHN



Date: February 18, 2026

Subject: Hawai'i Foodbank in Strong Support of HB 2208 HD1 Relating to Food Security

Aloha Chair Chun, Vice Chair Kusch, and members of the committee,

On behalf of Hawai'i Foodbank, I express our STRONG support for HB 2208, HD1 Relating to Food Security. This bill establishes and appropriates funds for the Hawai'i Farm to Families Program under the Department of Human Services to alleviate food shortages in the State. It also requires reports to the Legislature before the Regular Sessions of 2027 and 2028.

As the state's largest hunger-relief organization, Hawai'i Foodbank has been committed to ensuring no one in Hawai'i goes hungry since 1983. We work with over 250 hunger relief partners on O'ahu and Kaua'i to distribute food, and programs like Food 4 Keiki and 'Ohana Produce Plus provide nutritious meals to children and families. In addition to addressing daily needs, our organization mobilizes during emergencies to provide immediate relief and aid long-term recovery efforts.

Hawai'i Foodbank's Farm to Families program provides fresh, healthy food to those in need while also supporting local farmers and producers. Launched in 2020, it has already demonstrated its impact by investing \$13 million into more than 40 local farms and food hubs, distributing over 10.5 million pounds of Hawai'i-grown produce and proteins. HB 2208 will expand this initiative by strengthening the supply chain, ensuring fresh, Hawai'i-grown food reaches food-insecure households while supporting local agriculture.

Increased funding for Farm to Families is critically needed. The "State of Food Insecurity in Hawai'i 2024-2025" report revealed that 32% of households in our state experience food insecurity. Thirty-four percent (34%) of children experience food insecurity, up from 29% in 2023; and in households with children food security among adults was a staggering 45%, up from 38% in 2023. These figures highlight the urgent need for a sustainable solution to hunger in Hawai'i.

Hawai'i Foodbank is currently serving more than 160,000 people a month – as many people as during the height of the pandemic and twice as many people as we served prior. Given recent federal cuts, these numbers will only go up. Now, more than ever, we must increase our investment in our local food systems, building resilience for local farmers and families.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this vital measure and for your dedication to supporting our communities through initiatives like HB 2208.

With aloha,

Amy Miller  
President and CEO, Hawai'i Foodbank

**HB-2208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 12:40:39 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/18/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Colehour Bondera	Kanalani Ohana Farm	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and COmmittee Members:

Please fully support HB2208.

As a long time small-scale farmer in Honaunau, it has been a huge missing piece for the state not to be more supportive of food security and this will help us all.

Thank you for your consideration.

Colehour Bondera

KANALANI OHANA FARM

Honaunau, HI

colemel2@gmail.com



To: The House Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems (AGR)  
From: Sherry Pollack, Co-Founder, 350Hawaii.org  
Date: Wednesday, February 18, 2026, 9:30am

**In strong support of HB2208 HD1**

Aloha Chair Chun, Vice Chair Kusch, and AGR Committee members;

I am Co-Founder of the Hawai'i chapter of 350.org, the largest international organization dedicated to fighting climate change. 350Hawaii.org is in **strong support of HB2208 HD1** that establishes and appropriates funds in the form of grants for the Hawai'i Farm to Families Program under the Department of Human Services to alleviate food shortages in the State.

One in three households in Hawai'i faces food insecurity, and our most vulnerable populations need our support. This critical measure will establish and appropriate funds for the Hawai'i Farm to Families Program to fund food banks to purchase, store, and transport fresh, Hawai'i-grown or -produced food. By doing so, this program ensures fresh, locally grown produce reaches families facing food insecurity, and helps alleviate hunger.

Many families in Hawai'i struggle to put food on the table on a consistent basis. HB2208 HD1 is an important step toward reducing hunger in our islands. Moreover, efforts to invest in local agriculture and support our farmers builds Hawai'i's resiliency, and avoids the greenhouse gases that would have been emitted from shipping in food. HB2208 HD1 is a triple win for our families, our farmers, and our climate!

Please pass HB2208 HD1 so that we all may reap these benefits.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in **strong support** of this important legislation.

Sherry Pollack  
Co-Founder, 350Hawaii.org





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TO: Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems  
FROM: HAWAII FOOD INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION  
Lauren Zirbel, Executive Director

DATE: February 18, 2026

TIME: 9:30am

RE: HB2208 HD1 Relating to Food Security

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. Injecting state funding into our local food systems has a range of benefits. First and foremost this measure helps address the growing issue of food insecurity in our state. Far too many Hawaii families are facing food insecurity and they need your support. This measure will help provide healthy fresh food to families who utilize foodbanks in our state.

This measure also provides a consistent buyer to support our local agricultural producers. Having consistent buyers encourages growth in our local agricultural sector and helps make locally grown food more accessible and competitive for us all. This helps diversify our economy, creates agricultural jobs, and ensures that there is more local food for everyone to enjoy. This measure is good for families who will utilize it, it's good for our local farmers, it's good for our food systems, and good for Hawaii.

We believe that in order to improve food security, local food production, and resiliency in Hawaii it's vital for the State to support programs like this which support our food industry. We thank you for the opportunity to testify.



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

February 18, 2026

HEARING BEFORE THE  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

**TESTIMONY ON HB 2208, HD1**  
RELATING TO FOOD SECURITY

Conference Room 325 & Videoconference  
9:30 AM

Aloha Chair Chun, Vice-Chair Kusch, 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 2208, HD1**, which establishes and appropriates funds for the Hawai'i Farm to Families Program under the Department of Human Services to alleviate food shortages in the State while supporting local agricultural producers.

Hawai'i continues to face persistent food insecurity challenges, with many families lacking consistent access to fresh, nutritious food. At the same time, local farmers and ranchers often struggle with unpredictable markets, high distribution costs, and limited access to stable buyers. The Farm to Families Program addresses both challenges by connecting locally grown food with community feeding programs and households in need.

Since 2020, HFB has partnered with Hawai'i's food banks to help source fresh, locally grown food for community distribution. Through these partnerships, the Hawai'i Foodbank, Maui Food Bank, Kaua'i Foodbank, and the Hawai'i Island Food Basket work with hundreds of agency partners statewide to distribute safe, nutritious food to food-insecure individuals and families. These collaborations have demonstrated that purchasing local agricultural products strengthens food access while supporting Hawai'i's farmers and ranchers.

HB 2208, HD1 builds on this proven model by providing a structured, state-supported program that creates a reliable market for local producers while improving access to fresh, locally sourced food for vulnerable populations. Investing in local agriculture through programs like Farm to Families helps reduce reliance on imports, strengthens Hawai'i's

food system resilience, and ensures that public resources support both community well-being and local economic activity.

We appreciate the placement of this program within the Department of Human Services, recognizing food security as both a human services and agricultural issue. By aligning social support programs with local food production, HB 2208, HD1 represents a practical, collaborative approach to addressing hunger in Hawai'i.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

To: House Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems  
Re: **HB2208 HD1 – Relating to Food Security**  
Hawai'i State Capitol & Via Videoconference  
February 18, 2026, 9:30 AM

Dear Chair Chun, Vice Chair Kusch, and Committee Members,

On behalf of Hawai'i Children's Action Network Speaks!, I am writing in **SUPPORT of HB2208 HD1**. This bill establishes and appropriates funds for the Hawai'i Farm to Families Program to alleviate food shortages in the State and requires reports to the Legislature prior to the Regular Sessions of 2027 and 2028.

According to the Hawai'i Food Bank, one third (34%) of children in Hawai'i are living in households in which one or more of them are food insecure.<sup>1</sup> Especially with the highest cost of living and most expensive groceries in the nation,<sup>2</sup> it is nearly impossible for the low-income families in Hawai'i to afford to buy healthy food, such as fresh fruits and vegetables.

In addition, it is well established that the stresses of childhood poverty have both immediate and long-term effects on keiki's physical and mental health, behavioral self-control, academic achievement, and earnings as adults.<sup>3</sup>

That's why it's so important to support Hawai'i's food banks and farmers by providing state funds to Hawai'i food banks to secure consistent supplies of locally produced or grown food for hungry families.

Food banks and their partner agencies help ensure that struggling families with keiki do not go hungry by distributing millions of pounds of food per year to those in need in our state. The recent years of high inflation, especially for groceries, the devastating wildfires, and federal layoffs and cuts have led our state's food banks to struggle with continual rising demand.<sup>4</sup>

This program would have the added plus of supporting our local farms. Farm to families is a win-win, by providing local food to those who need it, supporting local farmers, and strengthening local food systems.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide this testimony. Please pass this bill.

Thank you,

Nicole Woo  
Director of Research and Economic Policy

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<sup>1</sup> <https://hawaiifoodbank.org/food-insecurity/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://meric.mo.gov/data/cost-living-data-series>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.apa.org/pi/ses/resources/publications/children-families>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.civilbeat.org/2025/10/hawaii-food-banks-and-farmers-are-in-real-trouble-with-federal-cuts>



**2026 Network Members**

Aloha Harvest  
Aloha United Way  
Chef Hui  
City and County of Honolulu  
County of Hawai'i  
Hawai'i Alliance for  
Progressive Action (HAPA)  
Hawai'i Appleseed  
Hawai'i Children's Action  
Network  
Hawai'i Dept. of Agriculture  
Hawai'i Dept. of Health  
Hawai'i Food Bank  
Hawai'i Food Bank - Kaua'i  
Branch  
Hawai'i Good Food Alliance  
Hawai'i Public Health Institute  
Kōkua Kalihi Valley  
Lanakila Pacific  
Mālama Kaua'i  
Maui Department of  
Agriculture  
Maui Food Bank  
Parents and Children Together  
Supersistence  
The Food Basket  
The Pantry, by Feeding Hawai'i  
Together  
Wai'anae Coast  
Comprehensive Health Center

[hawaiihungeraction.org](http://hawaiihungeraction.org)

## House Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems

Wednesday, February 18, 2026, at 9:30AM

**RE: Support for HB 2208, Relating to Food Security**

Dear Chair Marten, Vice Chair Olds, and members of the committee,

The Hawai'i Hunger Action Network, a coalition of more than twenty local organizations with the mission to advocate for food security for Hawai'i households, would like to express **strong support** for HB 2208, which would fund the Farm to Families program.

Our network is intimately familiar with the toll disasters can take on communities, and many of our members are at the frontlines of response efforts. Whether it is in response to wildfires, a pandemic, a government shutdown, a hurricane, flood, volcano eruption—or just the day-to-day emergency of needing to put food on the table in an economy when many families are one paycheck away from financial devastation—our emergency food partners are there to respond to the community's needs. And they often do this on very stretched and limited resources.

A strong emergency food system is a critical pillar of resiliency, not just because of its role in a disaster, but also in its potential to strengthen local food supply chains and our island's agricultural economy. This program would be a powerful step toward achieving this outcome, by guaranteeing that nutritious food is available to more families, supporting local farmers, and even reducing farm food waste.

Thank you for your leadership and for your consideration of this important legislation.

With aloha,  
Hawai'i Hunger Action Network membership



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Honolulu, O'ahu

Natalie Urminska  
Kaua'i

Aloha Chair Chun, Vice Chair Kusch, and Members of the House Agriculture & Food Systems 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 HB2208.**

HB2208 is an innovative approach to addressing food insecurity in Hawai'i by fostering a direct link between local agricultural producers and families in need. This legislation not only provides immediate relief to the significant number of households experiencing food shortages but also strengthens the local agricultural economy by ensuring that family farmers have a stable, reliable outlet for their products. By facilitating the flow of Hawai'i-grown produce through purchase and transportation costs, the bill helps overcome challenges that can deter small-scale farmers from participating in food assistance programs.

The establishment of the Hawai'i Farm to Families Program under HB2208 ushers in a new era of food assistance that operates as an economic driver for the state. By investing in the infrastructure needed to get local products from farms to food banks, this measure ensures that food assistance dollars serve a dual purpose: alleviating hunger while simultaneously supporting the sustainability and growth of Hawai'i's agricultural sector. This proactive economic model benefits not just those who receive food assistance, but also supports farmers by creating a dependable market for their goods, contributing to a more resilient and self-sufficient food system in Hawai'i.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Hunter Heavilin  
Advocacy Director  
Hawai'i Farmers Union



**Testimony to the House Committee on Agriculture  
Wednesday, February 18, 2026; 9:30 a.m.  
State Capitol, Conf. Room 325  
Via Videoconference**

**RE: HOUSE BILL NO. 2208, HOUSE DRAFT 1, RELATING TO FOOD SECURITY.**

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

The Hawaii Primary Care Association (HPCA) is a 501(c)(3) organization established to advocate for, expand access to, and sustain high quality care through the statewide network of Community Health Centers throughout the State of Hawaii. The HPCA **SUPPORTS THE INTENT** of House Bill No. 2208, RELATING TO FOOD SECURITY.

By way of background, the HPCA represents Hawaii's Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs). FQHCs provide desperately needed medical services at the frontlines to over 150,000 patients each year who live in rural and underserved communities. Long considered champions for creating a more sustainable, integrated, and wellness-oriented system of health, FQHCs provide a more efficient, more effective and more comprehensive system of healthcare.

The measure, as received by your Committee, would establish the Hawaii Farm to Families Program (Program) to fund food banks in the State to purchase, store, and transport fresh, Hawaii-grown or -produced food to food insecure communities. In addition, the bill would appropriate an unspecified amount of general funds for fiscal year 2026-2027, for the administration of the Program and provision of food to Food Banks through the Program.

The bill would take effect on July 1, 3000.

The HPCA acknowledges that pursuant to Act 213, Session Laws of Hawaii 2022, the Hawaii State Legislature established a five-year Food Hub Pilot Program to provide eligible applicants with financial assistance to establish and expand food hub operations on a scale to meet local demands. The Legislature further found that additional funding was necessary to facilitate the intended goals of the Food Hub Pilot Program by enacting Act 185, Session Laws of Hawaii 2025, to appropriate \$1,500,000 in general funds for fiscal 2025-2026 and the same amount for fiscal year 2026-2027.

**Testimony on House Bill No. 2208, House Draft 1**  
**Wednesday, February 18, 2026; 9:30 a.m.**  
**Page 2**

The HPCA has supported the Food Hub Pilot Program since its creation in 2022 and had also supported the provision of addition funding for that program in 2025.

In November 2025, the federal government shutdown stopped the provision of SNAP benefits to Hawaii's citizens. This placed an enormous strain on Hawaii's social safety net to prevent catastrophic outcomes for our most vulnerable communities. This crisis demonstrated how fragile Hawaii's food distribution system is and that the need for additional mechanisms to support nonprofit organizations throughout the State is prevalent and acute.

To the extent that the program proposed by this bill will provide additional resources to nonprofit organizations such as the Food Bank, the HPCA wholeheartedly supports this measure. However, we also note that the manner in which State resources are provided to nonprofits must be carefully examined.

We note that for measures seeking to appropriate funds to non-governmental agencies, the Attorney General had opined that such efforts may conflict with Article VII, Section 4 of the Hawaii Constitution. (**See**, House Bill No. 1468, Regular Session of 2019, among others.). We acknowledge that the authority to issue grants is solely that of the Legislative branch so how state funds are distributed to food banks must comply with Chapter 42F, Hawaii Revised Statutes, among others.

**Be that as it may, we urge your favorable consideration of this measure to further discussion.**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Public Affairs and Policy Director Erik K. Abe at 536-8442, or eabe@hawaiiipca.net.



**Chair Chun**  
**Vice Chair Kusch**  
**House Committee on Agriculture**

**Wednesday, February 18th, 2026**  
**9:30 AM**

**TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF HB2208 HD1 RELATING TO FOOD SECURITY**

Aloha Members of the House Committee on Agriculture,

The Hawai‘i State Youth Commission was first created through Act 106 in 2018, “to advise the governor and legislature on the effects of legislative policies, needs, assessments, priorities, programs, and budgets concerning the youth of the State.” The Hawai‘i State Youth Commission’s Public Health legislative committee is in **strong support** of **HB2208 HD1**.

As the bill’s findings make clear, Hawai‘i is in a food security emergency. Over one-third of keiki in Hawai‘i are growing up in food-insecure homes.<sup>1</sup> While this crisis is devastating for families as a whole, its impacts on young people can be especially severe. Youth experience hunger in the classroom as difficulty concentrating, increased anxiety, behavioral challenges, and long-term effects on health and well-being.<sup>2</sup> When families have to cut fresh produce first, the harm can be both immediate and lifelong.

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<sup>1</sup>[https://hawaiifoodbank.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/HawaiiFoodbank\\_FoodInsecurityReport\\_2025-25.pdf](https://hawaiifoodbank.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/HawaiiFoodbank_FoodInsecurityReport_2025-25.pdf)

<sup>2</sup><https://www.unicef.org/media/157661/file/Child-food-poverty-2024.pdf>

HB 2208 HD1 offers a practical response. By funding food banks to purchase, store, and transport fresh, locally grown food, this measure strengthens the critical safety net that already provides tens of millions of meals statewide, while also investing directly in local farmers and food hubs.

Creating a stable market for locally-grown produce keeps money in the local economy and builds a more resilient food system. Connecting our agricultural producers to food banks and partners helps the healthiest foods reach the families who need them most, instead of being a luxury that only some can afford.

HB 2208 HD1 is an important step toward ensuring that keiki across Hawai'i have access to fresh, healthy food and the nutrition they need to thrive. For these reasons, the Hawai'i State Youth Commission is in strong support of HB2208 HD1 and respectfully urges the Committee to pass this measure.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

The Hawai'i State Youth Commission

[hawaiistateyc@gmail.com](mailto:hawaiistateyc@gmail.com)

**HB-2208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 9:08:01 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/18/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Marsha Fahir	Maui Food Bank	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is Marsha Fahir (Sharpe) and I'm the board chair from Maui Food Bank.

I am writing in strong support of Farm to Families.

With 1 in 3 households in Hawai'i facing food insecurity, including 34% of all children, it is critical that we take action to ensure that everyone in our community has access to safe and healthy food. This bill is a win-win. It will provide critical access to fresh, culturally relevant foods for food insecure families, while also investing in local farmers and growers, who are critical to strengthening our community food systems and creating a healthier, more resilient Hawai'i.

The partnership between local farms and food organizations benefits families in our communities and our economy by:

1. **Strengthening Hawai'i's Food Supply Chain:** By investing in local agriculture, we reduce our dependence on imported goods, creating a more resilient and sustainable food system for Hawai'i.
1. **Supporting Local Farmers:** The bill offers a direct benefit to Hawai'i's agricultural sector, providing a steady and fair market for local produce. Farmers can plan for future growth knowing their products will feed their neighbors in need.
1. **Enhancing Nutritional Access:** Fresh, local produce provides essential nutrients to individuals and families who may otherwise lack access to healthy food options. This not only fights hunger but also promotes long-term health and wellness in our communities.

I'm also on the board of IMUA family services and we see the need growing there too.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to our shared vision of a thriving, food-secure Hawai'i. I am deeply grateful for your consideration of this important legislation

Thank you,

Marsha Fahir

Kula, Maui, Hawai'i

Board Chair, Maui Food Bank



P.O. Box 392, Kilauea, Kauai, HI, 96754

PHONE: (808) 212-4765 • FAX: (808) 828-2027 • E-MAIL: [bbrody1@hawaii.rr.com](mailto:bbrody1@hawaii.rr.com) • WEB SITE: [www.getfitkauai.com](http://www.getfitkauai.com)

## COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

Thursday, February 12th at 8:30AM

### Testimony in Strong Support of HB2208 HD1 - RELATING TO FOOD SECURITY

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Aloha Chair Chun, Vice Chair Kusch, and Members of the Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems,

My name is Bev Brody, and I am writing on behalf of Get Fit Kaua'i, the Healthy Eating Active Living (HEAL) coalition of Kauai County, representing more than 1000 members committed to improving health, safety, and quality of life for our island communities. We are in strong support of HB2208 HD1

With **one in three households in Hawai'i experiencing food insecurity — including 34% of our keiki** — it is essential that we take meaningful action to ensure every member of our community has access to safe, healthy food. **HB2208 HD1 is a win-win solution:** it expands access to fresh, culturally relevant foods for families in need while strengthening Hawai'i's agricultural sector and building a more resilient local food system.

Partnerships between local farms and community food organizations create broad, lasting benefits for Hawai'i by:

- **Strengthening Hawai'i's Food Supply Chain**  
Investing in local agriculture reduces our dependence on imported foods and supports a more resilient, sustainable statewide food system.
- **Supporting Local Farmers**  
This bill provides a reliable, fair market for Hawai'i-grown produce. Farmers gain stability, the ability to plan for future growth, and the assurance that their harvests will nourish local families.
- **Enhancing Nutritional Access**  
Fresh, locally grown foods offer essential nutrients that many food-insecure households struggle to access. Increasing availability of healthy produce not only addresses hunger today but also promotes long-term health and wellness across our communities.

HB2208 HD1 strengthens families, supports farmers, and invests in a healthier, more self-reliant Hawai'i.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

*BBrody*

Bev Brody  
Get Fit Kauai – Director  
H.E.A.L. (Healthy Eating Active Living) Community Coalition of Kauai County  
(808) 212-4765



**House Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems**

**Hawai'i Alliance for Progressive Action (HAPA) Strongly Supports: HB 2208 HD1**

February 18th, 2026 at 9:30am; Conference Room 325

Aloha Chair Chun, Vice Chair Kusch and members of the committee,

As a member of the Hawaii Hunger Action Network, HAPA **strongly supports HB2208 HD1** which seeks to allocate additional funds to increase the impact of the Farm to Families program via grants from the Department of Human Services (DHS).

With **one in three households in Hawaii experiencing food insecurity** and two-thirds of these families experiencing the most extreme version of this – reducing food intake, skipping meals, or going whole days without eating– this measure would help provide means to feeding our communities' families with nourishing, locally grown food. This additional funding and support would also support the local procurement minimums introduced through Act 175, SLH 2021. This economic stimulation is beneficial to the local economy and local business owners/operators, and increases financial support for the establishment and support of local infrastructure, production, and procurement.

Through the operating budget for the state's executive branch following the 2025 Hawai'i legislative session, \$500,000.00 per year for two years – 2026-27 and 2027-28 for a total of \$1,000,000.00 (one-million dollars) – was appropriated under the Department of Labor & Industrial Relations beyond the legislative vehicles of bills HB425 (2025) and companion SB1250 (2025) each requesting \$2,000,000.00 (two-million dollars) in appropriations. The rules added via amendments in this bill further clarify the process by which additional funding may be pursued through grants from the department and the appropriate uses of grant awards.

HB 2208 HD1 will build on the progress made last session to meet that additional needs our communities are faced with. Supporting food banks supports Hawai'i. Food banks have partnered with five hundred seventy-five local farms and food hubs to create a consistent market for Hawaii agriculture producers. Additionally, the Hawaii Foodbank invested over \$13,000,000 in Hawaii-grown produce over the last five years as of 2025 reporting data, which using the local foods economic multiplier, equates to an investment of nearly \$20,000,000 in our local economy – an investment in local food systems and resiliency.

Please support HB2208. Mahalo for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anne Frederick', is placed below the word 'Sincerely,'.

Anne Frederick, Executive Director



Hawaii Cattlemen's Council, Inc.

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

Rep. Cory M. Chun, Chair  
Rep. Matthias Kusch, Vice Chair

**HB2208 HD1**  
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Wednesday, February 18, 2026, 9:30 AM  
Conference Room 325 & Videoconference

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

The Hawaii Cattlemen's Council **supports HB2208 HD1** which establishes and appropriates funds for the Hawai'i Farm to Families Program under the Department of Human Services to alleviate food shortages in the State.

Food security is a base need for our community. No family should go hungry. We support this bill that will help feed our community as well as support local agriculture. Providing funds to our food banks to purchase local food is a win-win and encourages producers to increase local food production. Ranchers are always generous with their donations, but this program can ensure that beef purchases can be made when appropriate as well.

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





**Maui Food Bank**  
Nourishing Lives. Feeding Futures

**LATE**

February 18, 2026

**RE: Support for HB 2208 HD1, Relating to Food Security**

Aloha Chair Chun, Vice Chair Kusch, and members of the committee,

On behalf of the Maui Food Bank, I express our strong **support for HB 2208 HD1 Relating to Food Security** which establishes and appropriates funds in the form of grants for the Hawaii Farm to Families Program under the Department of Human Services to alleviate food shortages in the State.

For over 30 years, Maui Food Bank has provided daily and emergency assistance to those facing food insecurity in Maui County. Maui Food Bank distributes food to families and individuals on Maui, Molokai and Lanai through direct service programs and through our network of **148 agency partners**. Last fiscal year, we served on average 40,000 people each month, distributing a total of **7.6 million pounds** of nutritious food, including **2.9 million pounds of fresh produce**. Of those served, 35% are children and youth.

With 1 in 3 households in the entire State of Hawai'i facing food insecurity, including 34% of all children, it is critical that we take action to ensure that everyone in our community has access to safe and healthy food. This bill is a win-win. It will provide critical access to fresh, culturally relevant foods for food insecure families, while also investing in local farmers and growers, who are critical to strengthening our community food systems and creating a healthier, more resilient Hawai'i.

The partnership between local farms and food organizations benefits families in our communities and our economy by:

- 1. Strengthening Hawai'i's Food Supply Chain:** By investing in local agriculture, we reduce our dependence on imported goods, creating a more resilient and sustainable food system for Hawai'i.
- 2. Supporting Local Farmers:** The bill offers a direct benefit to Hawai'i's agricultural sector, providing a steady and fair market for local produce. Farmers can plan for future growth knowing their products will feed their neighbors in need.
- 3. Enhancing Nutritional Access:** Fresh, local produce provides essential nutrients to individuals and families who may otherwise lack access to healthy food options.



**Maui Food Bank**  
Nourishing Lives. Feeding Futures

This not only fights hunger but also promotes long-term health and wellness in our communities.

As an example, in FY25 the Maui Food Bank:

- Purchased 650,000 pounds of locally grown/produced food from 29 farmers/ranchers
- Generated \$1.1 million in revenue for local food producers and \$3.5 million for other Maui County food industry businesses.
- Collected 2.6 million pounds of surplus food from 78 business donors

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to our shared vision of a thriving, food-secure Hawai'i. I am deeply grateful for your consideration of this important legislation. HB 2208 empowers food distribution organizations to forge stronger partnerships with local farmers and food producers, ensuring that fresh, locally grown produce reaches families experiencing food insecurity. These collaborations between local farms and food organizations deliver benefits to both our communities and the economy.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony,

Lisa H. Paulson  
CEO, Maui Food Bank

**LATE**

**February 16, 2026**

To: Chair Cory M. Chun, Vice Chair Matthias Kusch, and Members of the House Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems

Subject: HB2208, HD1 – Relating to Food Security

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

I am writing in strong support of HB2208, HD1, which establishes and appropriates funds for the Hawai'i Farm to Families Program to alleviate food insecurity while strengthening Hawai'i's agricultural economy.

Hawai'i's high cost of living and heavy reliance on imported food have left as many as one in three households food insecure. When fresh, locally grown food is limited or unaffordable, families often turn to lower-cost, highly processed alternatives, which negatively affect long-term health outcomes. The supply chain disruptions experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic and recent federal instability demonstrated how vulnerable Hawai'i is when access to food depends heavily on imports.

HB2208, HD1 addresses both sides of this issue in a coordinated and practical way. By funding the purchase of Hawai'i-grown food for distribution through food banks, the bill simultaneously increases access to nutritious produce for families and provides a consistent market for local farmers. This approach keeps food dollars circulating within the state, supports agricultural viability, and reduces dependence on mainland imports.

The HD1 version appropriately strengthens the measure by establishing a structured grant program with clear eligibility standards, oversight, and reporting requirements. These safeguards ensure the responsible administration of public funds while maintaining the bill's central purpose: strengthening the connection between local producers and community food systems.

Investing in institutional purchasing of Hawai'i-grown food is not only a hunger relief strategy but also an agricultural resilience strategy. Stable local markets encourage farm expansion, production stability, and long-term growth within the farming sector.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to pass HB2208, HD1, and advance this strategic investment in Hawai'i's food and agricultural systems.

Mahalo,

Carlin McFadden & the Food+Policy Team  
#fixourfoodsystem

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**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.



# HAWAI'I FOOD+ POLICY

Honolulu, HI 96813  
food@purplemaia.org

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**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.



*Farmer owned, 'āina grown*

**LATE**

**Testimony In Support of HB 2208 Relating to Food Security**

Department of Human Services; Food Security; Hawai'i Farm to Families Program; Reports;  
Appropriation  
February 17th, 2026

**Testimony of Dana Shapiro  
Chief Executive Officer  
Hawai'i Ulu Producers Cooperative**

The Hawai'i 'Ulu Producers Cooperative strongly supports HB 2208 Relating to Food Security. We formed our cooperative in 2016 to build a network of small-scale, diversified farms and to improve community access to nutritious, culturally relevant foods. With 1 in 3 households in Hawai'i facing food insecurity, including 34% of all children, it is critical that we take action. This bill represents a "win-win" for our islands by providing fresh food to those in need while simultaneously investing in the local growers who strengthen our food systems.

We are living proof that farm-to-institution partnerships work. From 2018 to 2020, we served as a primary local supplier for the DOE's 'Aina Pono program, and we are happy to share that this school year our products are back on the regular breakfast and lunch menus as part of DOE's renewed commitment to increasing local procurement! We have seen firsthand how this relationship benefited both the community and our economy:

- **Farmer Growth:** Our partnership enabled us to grow our volumes from 20,000 pounds in 2017 to nearly 615,000 pounds by 2025. This month, we surpassed almost 3,000,000 lbs of produce purchased from local farmers since our inception.
- **Student Connection:** We have seen children's excitement when they recognize 'ulu in schools, proving that when fresh food is accessible, it changes the way the next generation views nutrition.

By supporting this program, we achieve three vital goals:

1. **Strengthening the Food Supply Chain:** We reduce dependence on imported goods and create a more resilient, self-sufficient island state.



**Hawai'i 'Ulu Producers Cooperative**

2. Supporting Local Agriculture: This bill provides a steady, fair market for our 200+ small-scale family farmers on Hawai'i Island, Kaua'i, O'ahu and Maui, allowing them to plan for future growth.
3. Enhancing Nutritional Access: For families who lack access to healthy options, this bill provides essential nutrients that promote long-term wellness and combat hunger.

We firmly believe that by appropriating the necessary funds and resources, Hawai'i can meet its goal of a healthier, more resilient food system. We urge you to pass HB 2208 to ensure our neighbors are fed and our farmers can continue to flourish.



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





PO Box 4, Kunia, Hawaii, 96759 || 808-622-9026 || [www.agstewardshiphawaii.org](http://www.agstewardshiphawaii.org)

February 17th, 2026

Aloha e Chair Chun, Vice Chair Kusch and Members of the Agriculture and Food Systems Committee

**Re: Testimony in Support of HB 2208 HD1, Relating to Food Security**

On behalf of Agriculture Stewardship Hawai'i, we write in strong support of HB 2208, Relating to Food Security, which establishes and appropriates funds for the Hawai'i Farm to Families Program under the Department of Human Services to alleviate food shortages in the State and requires reports to the Legislature.

Agriculture Stewardship Hawai'i is a nonprofit organization dedicated to improving the viability and sustainability of Hawai'i's farmers and ranchers through technical assistance, resource coordination, business education, and policy support. In our day-to-day work with producers and food system partners across the state, we see firsthand the deep and persistent food insecurity facing Hawai'i communities—including those who are growing and producing our food. Alarming, food system workers nationally are [more than twice as likely as workers](#) in other sectors to rely on SNAP and other food assistance programs. **The very people responsible for feeding our communities are often struggling to feed their own families.**

The Farm to Families Program addresses the twin challenges of food insecurity and support for local farmers by keeping dollars circulating within Hawai'i's economy, supporting local jobs, and building resilience across our food system. These investments have a multiplier effect—benefiting producers, distributors, food hubs, and communities alike—while reducing reliance on imported food and external supply chains. **HB 2208 further embeds the Farm to Families Program within core state operations, expands funding, and uplifts a win-win approach to addressing intersecting challenges.**

**With one in three households, on average, facing hunger and food insecurity in Hawai'i, our state is both in crisis and at a crossroads.** We need bold and systemic action, smart win-win policy approaches, and deeper recognition of the interconnected challenges of feeding our families, sustaining farming livelihoods, and addressing the systemic economic and social conditions that undergird both.

Mahalo for your time and consideration, and for your continued commitment to Hawai'i's farmers, food workers, and communities.

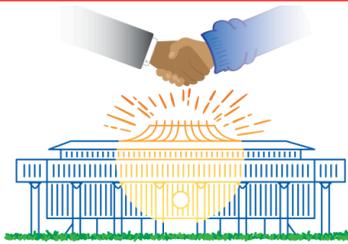
Warm wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Amanda Shaw".

Dr. Amanda Shaw, PhD, Statewide Food Systems Coordinator

Email: [amanda@agstewardshiphawaii.org](mailto:amanda@agstewardshiphawaii.org),

Tel: 808 429 5310



**LATE**

## CLIMATE FUTURE FORUM

To: Rep. Cory Chun, Chair  
Rep. Matthias Kusch, Vice Chair  
Members of the House Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems

Hearing: 02/18/2026, 9:30am

From: Climate Future Forum

Re: **STRONG SUPPORT for HB2208 HD1 RELATING TO FOOD SECURITY**

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

My name is Vivienne Hill, and I am submitting testimony on behalf of the Climate Future Forum Regenerative Food Systems Working Group in **strong support of HB2208 HD1**.

The Climate Future Forum is a youth-led organization that brings together young people from across Hawai'i to work on climate solutions, including food systems resilience. As youth engaged in this work, we see firsthand how food insecurity and climate impacts intersect in our communities.

HB2208 responds to a real and urgent crisis. One in three households in Hawai'i struggles to access food consistently, with keiki among those most affected. Families are skipping meals, and students are coming to school hungry. From a youth climate perspective, this is not just a social issue - it reflects deeper systemic failures in how we produce, distribute, and access food.

Farm to Families represents the kind of structural investment Hawai'i needs. By strengthening local supply chains, supporting farmers, and reducing reliance on imported food, this program helps build climate resilience while getting fresh, locally grown food to families who need it most. It also supports farming practices that improve soil health, reduce emissions tied to long-distance transport, and protect agricultural diversity - all critical for adapting to future disruptions.

As young people working at the intersection of climate and food systems, we view Farm to Families as model policy. It addresses immediate food insecurity while laying the groundwork for a stronger,

more regenerative local food system. HB2208 moves Hawai'i toward a future where every family can access nutritious local food and where our food system is part of the climate solution, not another vulnerability.

For these reasons, the Climate Future Forum Regenerative Food Systems Working Group strongly supports HB2208 HD1 and respectfully urges the Committee to pass this measure.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

Vivienne Hill

*On behalf of the Climate Future Forum*

*Regenerative Food Systems Working Group*



**HB-2208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/13/2026 10:12:03 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/18/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Roberta Hickey-Gómez	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Cory M. Chun, Vice Chair Matthias Kusch, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Roberta Hickey-Gómez, and I am writing in strong support of HB2208 HD1, the Hawai‘i Farm to Families Program.

Hawaii is facing a serious food insecurity crisis. In 2024–2025, 32 % of households — roughly 463,000 individuals — experienced food insecurity, lacking reliable access to nutritious food<sup>1</sup>. This burden is disproportionate: over 40 % of Native Hawaiians, Other Pacific Islanders, Filipinos, and American Indian/Alaska Natives lived in food-insecure households<sup>2</sup>.

HB2208 HD1 addresses this need by establishing the Hawai‘i Farm to Families Program, providing resources for food banks to purchase, store, and distribute locally grown, nutritious food. Supporting local agriculture also strengthens Hawaii’s economy, creating demand for farmers’ products, sustaining agricultural jobs, and keeping resources circulating in our communities.

Beyond economics, the program aligns with Mālama ‘āina — principles guiding Native Hawaiian communities in caring for the land and sustaining life. Strengthening local food systems reconnects communities to these traditions, supports culturally significant practices, and fosters resilience across the islands.

For these reasons — addressing food insecurity, supporting local agriculture, and honoring Hawai‘i’s cultural heritage — I urge the Committee to support and pass HB2208 HD1.

Mahalo nui loa for your consideration,  
Roberta Hickey-Gómez, Pūowaina Resident

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Footnotes:

1. [Hawaii News Now, 2025](#) – Report estimates roughly 463,000 individuals in Hawaii experienced food insecurity in 2024–2025.

2. [Hawaii Foodbank, 2023](#) – Over 40 % of Native Hawaiians, Other Pacific Islanders, Filipinos, and American Indian/Alaska Natives lived in food-insecure households.

**HB-2208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/13/2026 10:41:31 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/18/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Emma Waters	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Writing in strong support of this important bill that simultaneously supports local agriculture and healthy food for our neighbors in need. Mahalo.

**HB-2208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/13/2026 11:12:57 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/18/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Marcia Kemble	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Greetings Committee Members,

Please support HB 2208. An extremely high percentage of households in Hawaii are experiencing food insecurity. Increasing the ability of food banks to purchase locally grown food is a win-win for our communities and farmers. This will help grow our local food and agriculture economy by giving farmers reliable access to markets while providing our communities with nutritious food. We really need to work toward food security in the long term by increasing local food production. Food banks rely almost exclusively on private donations and grants, even though local governments rely heavily on them during times of crisis. The Farm to Families program would provide funding for purchasing from local farmers, improving emergency food access for families and opening up a local market for farmers during times of economic crisis.

Mahalo for your attention,  
Marcia Kemble  
Makiki

**HB-2208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/13/2026 6:11:46 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/18/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Johnnie-Mae L. Perry	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I, Johnnie-Mae L. Perry, Support

2208 HB RELATING TO FOOD SECURITY.

**HB-2208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/13/2026 7:39:38 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/18/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
chelsea pang	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Food allows for everyone to have what they need to thrive and contribute

**HB-2208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2026 9:38:07 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/18/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jane E Arnold	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Jane Arnold, and I live in Kaimuki Please support HB2208. It is a win for farmers and a win for food insecure families. Thank you.

Jane Arnold

1763 Iwi Way

Honolulu, HI 96816

**HB-2208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2026 9:42:22 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/18/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
David Ball	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this legislation.

David Ball

Waiialae-Kahala

**HB-2208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2026 10:18:26 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/18/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Dale Jensen	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Agriculture Committee Members:

I have been generously supporting Hawaii Foodbank for many years. The idea that we have people going hungry in our state is unforgiveable. Meanwhile, we have about 2/3 of the arable land in the state standing fallow. Any measure that can stimulate greater food production here on our islands deserves the full support of the legislature and governor. Let's find ways to get nutritious locally grown food into the hands of the hungry people in our state. Please give your full support to HB2208.

Sincerely,

Dale Jensen

Kailua

**HB-2208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2026 10:43:13 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/18/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Caroline Azelski	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

In support of. Thank you.

**HB-2208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2026 11:21:33 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/18/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Rik Masterson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

**I am writing in strong support of Farm to Families.**

With 1 in 3 households in Hawai‘i facing food insecurity, including 34% of all children, it is critical that we take action to ensure that everyone in our community has access to safe and healthy food. This bill is a win-win. It will provide critical access to fresh, culturally relevant foods for food insecure families, while also investing in local farmers and growers, who are critical to strengthening our community food systems and creating a healthier, more resilient Hawai‘i.

The partnership between local farms and food organizations benefits families in our communities and our economy by:

1. **Strengthening Hawai‘i’s Food Supply Chain:** By investing in local agriculture, we reduce our dependence on imported goods, creating a more resilient and sustainable food system for Hawai‘i.
1. **Supporting Local Farmers:** The bill offers a direct benefit to Hawai‘i’s agricultural sector, providing a steady and fair market for local produce. Farmers can plan for future growth knowing their products will feed their neighbors in need.
1. **Enhancing Nutritional Access:** Fresh, local produce provides essential nutrients to individuals and families who may otherwise lack access to healthy food options. This not only fights hunger but also promotes long-term health and wellness in our communities.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to our shared vision of a thriving, food-secure Hawai‘i. I am deeply grateful for your consideration of this important legislation.

Mahalo,

Rik Masterson

Hilo HI

**HB-2208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2026 1:09:13 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/18/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Christopher Dean	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill because I'm against wasting good food.

**HB-2208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2026 1:09:53 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/18/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
carole richelieu	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This bill will provide critical access to fresh, culturally relevant foods for food insecure families, while also investing in local farmers and growers, who are critical to strengthening our community food systems and creating a healthier, more resilient Hawai‘i

Hawaii Kai voter

**HB-2208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2026 2:21:33 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/18/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
TOM DIGRAZIA	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Strongly support. A step toward greater food independence for Hawaii nei.

**HB-2208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2026 3:43:31 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/18/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
B.A. McClintock	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

One in three households in Hawai‘i faces food insecurity, and our most vulnerable populations need our support. This critical measure ensures fresh, locally grown produce reaches families facing food insecurity, and helps alleviate hunger.

--Many families in Hawai‘i struggle to put food on the table on a consistent basis. HB2208 HD1 is an important step toward reducing hunger in our islands. Efforts to invest in local agriculture and support our farmers builds Hawaii’s resiliency, and avoids the greenhouse gases that would have been emitted from shipping in food. HB2208 HD1 is a triple win for our families, our farmers, and our climate! Please support this important bill. Mahalo.

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

Rep. Cory M. Chun, Chair

Rep. Matthias Kusch, Vice Chair

HEARING:

Wednesday, February 18, 2026 at 9:30 AM

VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

Conference Room 325

State Capitol

415 South Beretania Street

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT : HB 2008, HD1 - RELATING TO FOOD SECURITY.**

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

My name is Christine Andrews and I am a long-term resident of Wailuku, Maui. I write to you today in **strong support of HB 2208, HD1**, relating to food security. HB 2208, HD1 establishes and appropriates funds for the Hawaii Farm to Families Program under the Department of Human Services to alleviate food shortages in the State and requires reports to the Legislature before the Regular Sessions of 2027 and 2028.

I remember when my daughters were in elementary and middle school on Maui, they had a school garden. The students participated in a research project with Cornell University whereby they trialed different soil rehabilitation techniques, collected samples, and documented their results. I remember with pride my daughters speaking about the results of this project to a standing-room only meeting of the Hawaii Farmers Union United chapter at the Haiku Community Center. This experience really shaped my children and our choices as a family.

My youngest daughter went on to study environmental science at Vassar College. Her senior thesis focused on the subject of sustainability and food security in Hawaii. Her garden teacher went on to be executive director of Grow Some Good. After graduation, my daughter returned to Maui, and we make our weekly shopping trip to the Upcountry Farmers Market. We fully embrace a circular economy of depending on our farmers rather than imports. Venison stew made of locally-sourced axis deer by Maui Nui Venison is one of our favorites. My tenant is a teacher at Baldwin High School. He received grants to develop a hydroponic system for his classroom to produce tilapia and fresh produce. Farm to Families is modern Maui culture, and I have seen the benefits to health, well-being, community, and our economy from such efforts.

As a result of my lived experience with farm to families such as mine, I **strongly support HB 2008, HD1** and request that you do as well.

Mahalo nui for supporting Hawai'i students and families,

Christine L. Andrews, J.D.

Wailuku, Maui

**HB-2208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2026 8:44:26 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/18/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Georgia L Hoopes	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Committee Members!

One in three households in Hawai‘i faces food insecurity, and our most vulnerable populations need our support. This critical measure ensures fresh, locally grown produce reaches families facing food insecurity, and helps alleviate hunger.

Many families in Hawai‘i struggle to put food on the table on a consistent basis. HB2208 HD1 is an important step toward reducing hunger in our islands. Efforts to invest in local agriculture and support our farmers builds Hawaii’s resiliency, and avoids the greenhouse gases that would have been emitted from shipping in food. HB2208 HD1 is a triple win for our families, our farmers, and our climate!

Mahalo for your support!

Georgia Hoopes, Kalaheo

**HB-2208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2026 10:50:12 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/18/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Noel Shaw	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is Noel Shaw, and I am writing in strong support of Farm to Families.

With 1 in 3 households in Hawai‘i facing food insecurity, including 34% of all children, it is critical that we take action to ensure that everyone in our community has access to safe and healthy food. This bill is a win-win. It will provide critical access to fresh, culturally relevant foods for food insecure families, while also investing in local farmers and growers, who are critical to strengthening our community food systems and creating a healthier, more resilient Hawai‘i.

The partnership between local farms and food organizations benefits families in our communities and our economy by:

- **Strengthening Hawai‘i’s Food Supply Chain:** By investing in local agriculture, we reduce our dependence on imported goods, creating a more resilient and sustainable food system for Hawai‘i.
- **Supporting Local Farmers:** The bill offers a direct benefit to Hawai‘i’s agricultural sector, providing a steady and fair market for local produce. Farmers can plan for future growth knowing their products will feed their neighbors in need.
- **Enhancing Nutritional Access:** Fresh, local produce provides essential nutrients to individuals and families who may otherwise lack access to healthy food options. This not only fights hunger but also promotes long-term health and wellness in our communities.

As someone who works to restore food systems in Hawaii and actively invests time and resources toward this important effort, strengthening Farm to Family initiatives for our most vulnerable community members ensures equity as we move toward a better Hawai‘i. It further refocuses our local economy on subsistence systems necessary for continued survival in the middle of the ocean.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to our shared vision of a thriving, food-secure Hawai‘i. I am deeply grateful for your consideration of this important legislation.

Thank you,

Noel Shaw, Kalāwahine, O'ahu

**HB-2208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2026 11:13:46 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/18/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
kimdonghyeon	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support HB 2208 HD1. The statistics around food insecurity in Hawai‘i are staggering. One in three households in Hawaii report experiencing food insecurity. Nearly half (46%) of ALICE households lack consistent access to food. Increasing the ability of food banks to purchase locally grown food is a win-win for our communities and farmers. One major challenge local farmers face is access to markets. This will help grow our local food and agriculture economy while providing our communities with nutritious food. As the cost of imports continues to increase, investing in our local food economy will help bolster our local production and food security in the long term.

Preparing Hawai‘i’s families in the wake of disaster, food banks rely almost exclusively on private donations and grants, even though local governments rely heavily on them during times of crisis. The Farm to Families program would provide funding for purchasing from local farmers, improving emergency food access for families and opening up a local market for farmers during times of economic crisis.

Mahalo for your consideration!

kimdonghyeon

**HB-2208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/15/2026 6:25:23 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/18/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jeannine Johnson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

During COVID, I worked at Lunalilo Home preparing and delivering meals for Hawaii Meals on Wheels to kupuna in East Honolulu. Although it was an unprecedented time of need, I still see kupuna who are at risk of food insecurity. The lines are so long to access the food pantries at the Angel Network and King's Chapel that traffic backs up for a mile along Kalaniana'ole Highway. Please **support HB 2208 HD1** and the Farm to Families program which would provide funding for purchasing from local farmers, improving emergency food access for families and open up a local market for farmers during times of economic crisis. Mahalo!

**HB-2208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/15/2026 6:33:37 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/18/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Lisa Galloway	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please feed our people.

**HB-2208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/15/2026 7:36:06 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/18/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
John C Wert III	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support passage of HB2208 HD1. Hawa'ii MUST become more food independent and not have to rely almost 100% on "imported" food, which must be shipped in to Hawai'i. Locally produced food should be less expensive (no shipping costs), fresher (no shipping time), and readily available. One option I have NEVER heard mentioned in my 30+ years in Hawai'i is the production of sugar from sugar beets, which would enable 2-3 crops per year vice 1 every 2 years for cane sugar. Beet sugar is also less labor intensive. Perhaps current non-operating mills could be converted to processing sugar beets.

**HB-2208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/15/2026 8:42:48 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/18/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kelsey Amos	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Strongly support. This is the kind of action needed to support our most vulnerable community members during increasing federal iuncertainty. They deserve not just canned food and commodities but fresh locally grown food as well. And, this is a win for the local economy and for supporting the growth of local agriculture. Please pass.

**HB-2208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/15/2026 8:54:37 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/18/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
William Caron	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support Farm to Families legislation. The need is urgent. 1 in 3 households in Hawai‘i face food insecurity, including 34% of all children.

The partnership between local farms and food organizations benefits families in our communities and our economy by:

- **Strengthening Hawai‘i’s Food Supply Chain:** By investing in local agriculture, we reduce our dependence on imported goods, creating a more resilient and sustainable food system for Hawai‘i.
- **Supporting Local Farmers:** The bill offers a direct benefit to Hawai‘i’s agricultural sector, providing a steady and fair market for local produce. Farmers can plan for future growth knowing their products will feed their neighbors in need.
- **Enhancing Nutritional Access:** Fresh, local produce provides essential nutrients to individuals and families who may otherwise lack access to healthy food options. This not only fights hunger but also promotes long-term health and wellness in our communities.

**HB-2208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/15/2026 9:17:51 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/18/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Lela Meeken	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support HB 2208 HD1. The statistics around food insecurity in Hawai'i are staggering. One in three households in Hawaii report experiencing food insecurity. Nearly half (46%) of ALICE households lack consistent access to food. Increasing the ability of food banks to purchase locally grown food is a win-win for our communities and farmers. One major challenge local farmers face is access to markets. This will help grow our local food and agriculture economy while providing our communities with nutritious food. As the cost of imports continues to increase, investing in our local food economy will help bolster our local production and food security in the long term.

Preparing Hawai'i's families in the wake of disaster, food banks rely almost exclusively on private donations and grants, even though local governments rely heavily on them during times of crisis. The Farm to Families program would provide funding for purchasing from local farmers, improving emergency food access for families and opening up a local market for farmers during times of economic crisis.

Mahalo for your consideration!

Lela Meeken, Kea'au HI

**HB-2208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/15/2026 9:59:56 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/18/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kendall Krumm	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support HB 2208 HD1. The statistics around food insecurity in Hawai'i are staggering. One in three households in Hawaii report experiencing food insecurity. Nearly half (46%) of ALICE households lack consistent access to food. Increasing the ability of food banks to purchase locally grown food is a win-win for our communities and farmers. One major challenge local farmers face is access to markets. This will help grow our local food and agriculture economy while providing our communities with nutritious food. As the cost of imports continues to increase, investing in our local food economy will help bolster our local production and food security in the long term.

Preparing Hawai'i's families in the wake of disaster, food banks rely almost exclusively on private donations and grants, even though local governments rely heavily on them during times of crisis. The Farm to Families program would provide funding for purchasing from local farmers, improving emergency food access for families and opening up a local market for farmers during times of economic crisis.

Mahalo for your consideration!

Kendall Krumm, Kailua

**HB-2208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/15/2026 10:51:05 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/18/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Regina Gregory	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

support

**HB-2208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/15/2026 11:29:18 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/18/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cristina Holt	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Marten, Vice Chair Olds, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Cristina Holt. I live on Hawai'i Island, and I am here in strong support of HB 2208.

One in three households in Hawai'i are struggling to consistently access **food**.

**And two-thirds of those families are skipping meals. Going whole days without eating.**

That is a moral alarm bell.

We live in one of the most agriculturally rich places on earth. We can grow kalo. We can grow 'ulu. We can grow long beans and bok choy and Okinawan sweet potato. We can grow food that nourishes bodies and reflects culture.

And yet we import nearly everything.

So what does that mean? It means we are surrounded by abundance and still living with scarcity. That is not a supply problem. That is a systems problem.

HB 2208 is elegant because it does something so simple it feels obvious:

It connects the people who grow food  
with the people who need food  
and keeps the money here while doing it.

That is infrastructure that must be prioritized, right now.

Right now, food banks are operating at levels we saw during the height of the pandemic, except the emergency funding is gone.

At the same time, local farmers are struggling with rising input costs, shipping costs, land access, labor shortages. They need reliable markets.

This bill answers both realities at once.

When we invest in Hawai'i-grown food and route it through food banks, we are not just feeding families. We are strengthening local agriculture. We are building supply chains that are closer to home. We are reducing dependence on imported food that arrives by ship and leaves by cash flow.

This program says fresh food is not a privilege. It is a baseline.

It also says that mālama 'āina is not just about protecting land from harm, it is about ensuring the land feeds the people who care for it.

This bill is smart economics. The money circulates. Farmers stay afloat. Food banks distribute higher-quality food. Families eat better. Health outcomes improve. The state spends less downstream on preventable illness.

It is rare that a bill aligns so cleanly with dignity, local economy, and long-term resilience.

HB 2208 does. Please pass this bill.

Mahalo for your leadership.

Cristina Holt  
Hawai'i Island

**HB-2208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/15/2026 11:38:28 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/18/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jordan Smith	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

February 18, 2026

Testimony in Support of HB 2208, HD1

Relating to Food Security

Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems

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

I am writing in **strong support** of Farm to Families.

With 1 in 3 households in Hawai‘i facing food insecurity, including 34% of all children, it is critical that we take action to ensure that everyone in our community has access to safe and healthy food. This bill is a win-win. It will provide critical access to fresh, culturally relevant foods for food insecure families, while also investing in local farmers and growers, who are critical to strengthening our community food systems and creating a healthier, more resilient Hawai‘i.

The partnership between local farms and food organizations benefits families in our communities and our economy by:

1. **Strengthening Hawai‘i’s Food Supply Chain:** By investing in local agriculture, we reduce our dependence on imported goods, creating a more resilient and sustainable food system for Hawai‘i.
1. **Supporting Local Farmers:** The bill offers a direct benefit to Hawai‘i’s agricultural sector, providing a steady and fair market for local produce. Farmers can plan for future growth knowing their products will feed their neighbors in need.
1. **Enhancing Nutritional Access:** Fresh, local produce provides essential nutrients to individuals and families who may otherwise lack access to healthy food options. This not only fights hunger but also promotes long-term health and wellness in our communities.

This win-win-win legislation is a no-brainer to stimulate our local economy and accomplish many of the goals the Legislature proposes to tackle around affordability and food security.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to our shared vision of a thriving, food-secure Hawai'i. I am deeply grateful for your consideration of this important legislation.

Respectfully,

Jordan Smith

Honolulu, 96817

**HB-2208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/15/2026 12:37:35 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/18/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Judith White	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Helping all Hawaii individuals to have enough to eat is BASIC!

Judith White,

Member, Kauai Indivisible

**HB-2208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/15/2026 2:15:58 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/18/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ann Dorsey	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please **support HB 2208 HD1**. The statistics around food insecurity in Hawai'i are staggering. One in three households in Hawaii report experiencing food insecurity. Nearly half (46%) of ALICE households lack consistent access to food. Increasing the ability of food banks to purchase locally grown food is a win-win for our communities and farmers. One major challenge local farmers face is access to markets. This will help grow our local food and agriculture economy while providing our communities with nutritious food. As the cost of imports continues to increase, investing in our local food economy will help bolster our local production and food security in the long term.

Preparing Hawai'i's families in the wake of disaster, food banks rely almost exclusively on private donations and grants, even though local governments rely heavily on them during times of crisis. The Farm to Families program would provide funding for purchasing from local farmers, improving emergency food access for families and opening up a local market for farmers during times of economic crisis.

Thank you

**HB-2208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/15/2026 2:45:21 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/18/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Joell Edwards	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Joell Edwards. I am a Wainiha resident and small rural grocery store owner on the North Shore of Kaua'i. Each month, on the last Wednesday, we host a mobile food pantry provided by Hawaii Food Bank Kaua'i on our property because we know that is when many families are stretched to their absolute limit. I am writing in strong support of HB2208 HD1.

I live in a community that is beautiful — and vulnerable. When heavy rains come, our highway floods. When there are landslides, bridges close. When Kūhiō Highway shuts down, our community can be physically cut off from the rest of the island. In those moments, deliveries stop. Shelves thin out. Families worry about how long the isolation will last.

Food insecurity here is not a statistic —we see our community calculating how to make groceries last until the next paycheck. One in three households in Hawai'i experiences food insecurity. Nearly half of ALICE households lack consistent access to food. In rural communities like mine, those numbers hit harder because our margin for disruption is so small.

HB2208 HD1 is smart, resilient policy. Allowing food banks to purchase locally grown food strengthens both sides of our food system. It supports farmers who struggle with consistent market access, and it ensures families receive fresh, nutritious food grown right here at home.

As import costs rise and climate-driven disasters become more frequent, we cannot continue relying so heavily on distant supply chains. Investing in local production is not optional — it is necessary for survival and long-term stability.

Food banks are essential emergency infrastructure, especially in rural areas like ours. Yet they rely almost entirely on private donations and grants, even though government agencies depend on them during crises. This program provides stable funding to purchase from local farmers, strengthening emergency response while keeping dollars circulating in our islands.

HB2208 HD1 helps communities like mine weather the next storm — literally and economically.

**HB-2208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/15/2026 5:50:31 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/18/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Malia Chun	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support HB 2208 HD1. The statistics around food insecurity in Hawai‘i are staggering. One in three households in Hawaii report experiencing food insecurity. Nearly half (46%) of ALICE households lack consistent access to food. Increasing the ability of food banks to purchase locally grown food is a win-win for our communities and farmers. One major challenge local farmers face is access to markets. This will help grow our local food and agriculture economy while providing our communities with nutritious food. As the cost of imports continues to increase, investing in our local food economy will help bolster our local production and food security in the long term.

Preparing Hawai‘i’s families in the wake of disaster, food banks rely almost exclusively on private donations and grants, even though local governments rely heavily on them during times of crisis. The Farm to Families program would provide funding for purchasing from local farmers, improving emergency food access for families and opening up a local market for farmers during times of economic crisis.

Mahalo for your consideration!

Malia Chun, Kekaha, Kaua‘i

February 15, 2026

To: Chair Cory Chun, Vice Chair Matthias Kusch, and the House Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems

Subject: **HB2208 HD1**, Relating to Food Security

Aloha,

My name is Sydney Haas and I am a farmer in Hale'iwa. I am writing in **support of HB2208 HD1**, which establishes and funds the Hawai'i Farm to Families Program to help alleviate food shortages amongst our communities.

Our communities deserve better than to be left struggling to feed themselves and their families. Food insecure individuals are pressured to choose between nutritious choices, if available, and what is affordable enough to feed themselves and their 'ohana. Many parents are forced to skip meals, go full days without food, or for-go their prescription medicine to afford food for their keiki. Those facing hunger experience higher rates of nutritional deficiencies, and physical and mental health disparities such as obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, anxiety, and depression. No family across the pae 'āina should need to experience this level of distress.

Recent cuts to federal funding are threatening the future of Hawai'i's food banks and their ability to adequately serve our communities and farmers. Food banks rely on these funds to purchase from local farmers and to operate programs like mobile markets, which help reach underserved communities. The demand for food bank resources has drastically increased compared to pre-pandemic data, and is still expected to continue rising. As demand grows, support fades. Funding for our food banks has been slashed, which has resulted in a loss of millions of dollars from federal sources. The money lost could have been used to support local farmers and provide quality, nutritious, and locally grown food for our communities. It is critical for the State to take on the initiative of equipping our food banks with the means to feed our people and keiki.

As a farmer, I understand how important the food bank's purchasing power is for local producers. For example, it allows the food bank to purchase in larger quantities than many other market outlets or customers are capable of doing. This is not only beneficial for farms by allowing them to have a reliable customer in their local food bank, but it also helps put more locally grown produce on peoples' plates, and contributes to Hawai'i's local economies.

**I urge the committee to pass HB2208 HD1** to help reduce hunger within our communities and support the well-being of all growing keiki. Passing this measure can help compensate for the uncertainty of support from federal sources for our food banks, and provide a beneficial market for local farmers.

Mahalo to the committee for the opportunity to testify,

Sydney Haas

**HB-2208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/15/2026 6:23:25 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/18/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Ruta Jordans	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

For the health of our ohana please support this bill.

**HB-2208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/15/2026 9:39:36 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/18/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Cory Harden	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha legislators,

Local food is the best!

mahalo, Cory

**HB-2208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/15/2026 10:42:02 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/18/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
M. Leilani DeMello	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I KĀKO‘O HB 2208 HD1. The statistics around food insecurity in Hawai‘i are staggering. One in three households in Hawaii report experiencing food insecurity. Nearly half (46%) of ALICE households lack consistent access to food. Increasing the ability of food banks to purchase locally grown food is a win-win for our communities and farmers. One major challenge local farmers face is access to markets. This will help grow our local food and agriculture economy while providing our communities with nutritious food. As the cost of imports continues to increase, investing in our local food economy will help bolster our local production and food security in the long term.

Preparing Hawai‘i’s families in the wake of disaster, food banks rely almost exclusively on private donations and grants, even though local governments rely heavily on them during times of crisis. The Farm to Families program would provide funding for purchasing from local farmers, improving emergency food access for families and opening up a local market for farmers during times of economic crisis.

Mahalo,

M. Leilani DeMello

‘Ōla‘a, Puna, Hawai‘i

**HB-2208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/15/2026 11:25:49 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/18/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jackie Keefe	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

My name is Jackie Keefe, and I am **in strong support of HB2208.**

The statistics around food insecurity in Hawai'i are staggering. One in three households in Hawaii report experiencing food insecurity. Nearly half (46%) of ALICE households lack consistent access to food. Increasing the ability of food banks to purchase locally grown food is a win-win for our communities and farmers. One major challenge local farmers face is access to markets. This will help grow our local food and agriculture economy while providing our communities with nutritious food. As the cost of imports continues to increase, investing in our local food economy will help bolster our local production and food security in the long term.

Preparing Hawai'i's families in the wake of disaster, food banks rely almost exclusively on private donations and grants, even though local governments rely heavily on them during times of crisis. The Farm to Families program would provide funding for purchasing from local farmers, improving emergency food access for families and opening up a local market for farmers during times of economic crisis.

Please pass HB2208 HD1.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Jackie Keefe

**HB-2208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 7:12:38 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/18/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
pahnelopi mckenzie	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I SUPOORT HB 2208 HD1.

The farm to families bill is essential to be passed. The food security lives in the ability for organizations such as the Food Bank to continue to bring fresh foods to the community. This supports local farmers produce to be purchased to distributed. I support HB 2208 HD1

Pahnelopi McKenzie

**HB-2208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 8:28:58 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/18/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Glen Kagamida	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

SUPPORT

**HB-2208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 8:32:24 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/18/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
gayle goodman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems

HB2208

2/18/26 9:30 AM

Testimony in Support of Farm to Families

Aloha,

I am Gayle Goodman, writing as an individual citizen in strong support of Farm to Families.

With 1 in 3 households in Hawai‘i facing food insecurity, including 34% of all children, it is critical that we take action to ensure that everyone in our community has access to safe and healthy food. This bill is a win-win. It will provide critical access to fresh, culturally relevant foods for food insecure families, while also investing in local farmers and growers, who are critical to strengthening our community food systems and creating a healthier, more resilient Hawai‘i.

The partnership between local farms and food organizations benefits families in our communities and our economy by:

**Strengthening Hawai‘i’s Food Supply Chain:** By investing in local agriculture, we reduce our dependence on imported goods, creating a more resilient and sustainable food system for Hawai‘i.

**Supporting Local Farmers:** The bill offers a direct benefit to Hawai‘i’s agricultural sector, providing a steady and fair market for local produce. Farmers can plan for future growth knowing their products will feed their neighbors in need.

**Enhancing Nutritional Access:** Fresh, local produce provides essential nutrients to individuals and families who may otherwise lack access to healthy food options. This not only fights hunger but also promotes long-term health and wellness in our communities.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to our shared vision of a thriving, food-secure Hawai'i. I am deeply grateful for your consideration of this important legislation.

Thank you,

Gayle Goodman, Honolulu

Aloha Hawai‘i State Legislature,

We are writing in **strong support of increased funding for the Farm to Families** program under the Department of Human Services.

Thirty-two percent (32%) of all households in Hawai‘i are food insecure, including 34% of all children. In 11% of households’ children are going hungry. It is critical that we take action NOW to ensure that everyone in our community has access to safe and healthy food.

Farm to Families legislation represents a meaningful opportunity to advance both food security and community resilience across the state. By increasing our investment in locally grown food for distribution to households facing hardship, Farm to Families improves access to fresh, nutritious meals while supporting Hawai‘i farmers. This connection between agriculture and food assistance builds resilience for both families and farmers in times of crisis.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to our shared vision of a thriving, food-secure Hawai‘i. We are deeply grateful for your consideration of this important legislation.

Sincerely,

Sherry Pollack	Statewide	350Hawaii
Amanda Shaw	Statewide	Agriculture Stewardship Hawai‘i
Marcus Iwane	Statewide	Ahahui o na Kauka, the Association of Native Hawaiian Physicians
Katie Crowe	Hawai‘i	Aina Exotics LLC
Tim Munley	Kaua‘i	Aloha Church
Cathy Kerch	O‘ahu	Aloha Diaper Banl
Norma Atiga	O‘ahu	Alternative Structures International
Keolamaikalani Taniguchi	O‘ahu	Armed Services YMCA
Ayme Becnel	O‘ahu	Better Tomorrows
Asaka Herman	Kaua‘i	Boys & Girls Club of Hawaii
Aaron Tsang	O‘ahu	Calvary Assembly of God
Lillian Carreira	O‘ahu	Catholic charities
Ron Garrison	Kaua‘i	Church of the Pacific/Ho`okipa Kauai Food Pantries
Farley Bayudan	O‘ahu	City of Joy Assembly of God - Ohana Food Distribution
David Worker	O‘ahu	Community People Ministries
Raymond Donato	O‘ahu	Crossfire Ministries
Coleene Ako	O‘ahu	Crossfire Ministries
Deanna Alquiza	Kaua‘i	EAH Housing
Susanna Ho	O‘ahu	EAH Housing Inc
Neian Ponun	Hawai‘i	Elementary school
Joshua Uyehara	Kaua‘i	Family and Friends of Agriculture
Daynna Jones	O‘ahu	Franciscan Vistas Ewa
James DeJesus	O‘ahu	Fresh Aloha Direct/ Aloun Farms
Keith Yap	Kaua‘i	Gay & Robinson, Inc

Bev Brody	Kaua'i	Get Fit Kauai - the Healthy Eating Active Living Coalition of Kauai County
Violette Ishikawa	O'ahu	Giving Hope Hawaii
Leilani Lori Bishop	O'ahu	Grace and Favor Church
Kari Hagedorn	Maui	Hana Farmers Market
Jodi Robinson	Statewide	Hawai'i Alliance of Nonprofit Organizations (HANO)
Nicole Woo	Statewide	Hawai'i Children's Action Network Speaks!
Liza Ryan Gill	Statewide	Hawai'i Coalition for Immigrant Rights
Nate Hix	Statewide	Hawai'i Public Health Institute
Lynne Wooddell	O'ahu	Hawai'i Foodbank
Brent Kakesako	Statewide	Hawai'i Alliance for Community-Based Economic Development
Anne Frederick	Statewide	Hawaii Alliance for Progressive Action (HAPA)
Daniela Spoto	O'ahu	Hawai'i Appleseed
Brian Miyamoto	O'ahu	Hawaii Farm Bureau
Elizabeth Damonte	O'ahu	Hawaii Food Bank Volunteer
Kelsey Amos	O'ahu	Hawai'i Food+ Policy
Tricia Coloma	O'ahu	Hawaii Foodbank
Evan Poole	O'ahu	Hawaii Foodbank
Amy Miller	O'ahu	Hawai'i Foodbank
Elia Herman	O'ahu	Hawai'i Foodbank
Laurie Yoshida	Kaua'i	Hawai'i Foodbank - Kauai Advisory Board
Craig Shikuma	O'ahu	Hawaii Foodbank Board of Directors
Marcy Jackson	O'ahu	Hawaii Foodbank Board of Directors
Andrew Ogata	O'ahu	Hawai'i Health & Harm Reduction Center
Dana Shapiro	Statewide	Hawaii Ulu Cooperative
Anna Marie Elderts	O'ahu	Hina Mauka Teen CARE
Rebecca Madrid	O'ahu	Honolulu Fil-am SDA Church
Paula Reeves	Kaua'i	Ho'okipa Food Pantry - Volunteer
Jasmin pullman	O'ahu	Hope Chapel Kahuku
ESTRELITA. ANDRES	O'ahu	Jesus is Alive Fellowship
Estrelita Andres	O'ahu	Jesus is Alive Fellowship
Louetta Davis	O'ahu	Kalihi Palama Health Center - Kohou
Mark Willman	Kaua'i	Kaua'i Bible Church
Bernadette Tanalin	Kaua'i	Kauai Economic Opportunity, Inc.
Stephanie iona	Kaua'i	Kekaha Agriculture Assn
Aurora Mendoza	Kaua'i	Kings Lihue church
Martyn Benjamin	O'ahu	Kokua Kalihi Valley
Leslie Moody	O'ahu	Kroc Center Hawaii
Melissa Ka'onohi-Camit	O'ahu	Lāhui Foundation
Rachel Alexander	O'ahu	Lakeside Alliance
Rona Yagi Fukumoto	O'ahu	Lanakila Pacific
Yvonne Johnson	Kaua'i	Loaves & Fishes Food Pantry (Lihue); also small farmer on south shore (rural Koloa)
Gracie Albright	Maui	Lokelani 'Ohana Resource Center (Lokelani Intermeidate School)

Noe Neumann	O'ahu	Lokoea Farms
Ricky Kang	O'ahu	Love & Light Ministries
Megan Fox	Kaua'i	Mālama Kaua'i
Kilihune Meyer	Kaua'i	Malama Kauai
Chery Gourley	O'ahu	MARSH - Pyramid Insurance
Debbie Cabebe	Maui	Maui Economic Opportunity, Inc.
Lisa Paulson	Maui	Maui Food Bank
Brandi Saragosa	Maui	Maui Food Bank
Moana Lutey	Maui	Maui Food Bank
Marsha Fahir	Maui	Maui Food Bank - Board Chair
Steve Ulene	Maui	Maui Food Bank Board of Trustees
Michele	Maui	McLean
Nona Etse	O'ahu	Message of peace ministry outreach
Judy Guajardo	Maui	Na Hoaloha
Jason Brand	O'ahu	Nalo Farms LLC
Dale Jensen	O'ahu	
Linda Seyler	O'ahu	North Shore Food Bank
Cynthia Archibald	O'ahu	North Shore Nutrition
Laverne Suster	O'ahu	OLPH Food Pantry Ministry
Nick Cambra	O'ahu	Our Lady Of Mount Carmel Catholic Church
Mark Yen	O'ahu	Our Lady of Sorrows
Owen Kaneshiro	O'ahu	Owen K. Kaneshiro Farms, LLC
Marlow DeRego	O'ahu	Retired
Lesah Merritt	Kaua'i	Safeway; Hawai'i Foodbank Kaua'i Advisory Board
Jana Dove	O'ahu	Saint Timothy's Episcopal Church Aiea
Addie Texeira-Browne	Maui	Self at Maui Food Bank
Alberta Patchen	Moloka'i	St Damien Molokai Parish
Paul Patchen	Moloka'i	St Damien Molokai Parish
Sandy Kealoha	O'ahu	St Matthews Episcopal Church
Deann Megonnell	Kaua'i	St Michaels Loaves & Fishes
Lauralee Kawamata	O'ahu	St Timothy's episcopal church
Edward Van Houten	O'ahu	St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, Wahiawa, HI.
Thao Nguyen	O'ahu	Sts. Peter & Paul Catholic Church
Kristin Frost Albrecht	Hawai'i	The Food Basket Inc., Hawai'i Island's Food Bank
Jennine Sullivan	O'ahu	The Pantry by Feeding Hawaii Together
Carrol smmons	O'ahu	The Private Sector Charity
David Lucus	O'ahu	The Salvation Army
Johnny Gordines	Kaua'i	Tropical Flowers Express
Mariailiana stark	O'ahu	University of Hawaii at manoa
Brian Randle	O'ahu	US Navy
Elizabeth Kekua	O'ahu	Voice of God Ministries
Liliuokalani Coyle	O'ahu	Voice of God Ministries
Liliuokalani Coyle	O'ahu	Voice of God Ministries
Elizabeth Kekua	O'ahu	Voice of God Ministries
Moana Silva	O'ahu	Waianae Baptist Church
Moana Silva	O'ahu	Waianae Baptist Church

Fuli Soa	O'ahu	Waimānalo Elementary & Intermediate School Family Resource Center	
Cheryl Lum	Kaua'i	YWCA of Kauai	
Louise Wolcott	O'ahu	Lilson Maile Laau	O'ahu
Randy Junkman	O'ahu	Lynda Messier	O'ahu
Hervie Messier	O'ahu	Jennifer Baxter	Kaua'i
Valerie Chang	Kaua'i	Kathryn Ellman	O'ahu
Faith Faustorilla	O'ahu	Caroline Wilhite	O'ahu
Taylor Bair	O'ahu	Diane Bruce	O'ahu
Leilani Kim	O'ahu	Nina Yopp	O'ahu
Hans Van Tilburg	O'ahu	Tricia Coloma	O'ahu
Carlo Cayetano	O'ahu	Allyn Kau	O'ahu
Kiana Lee	O'ahu	Michelle Frederick	O'ahu
Reton Shiu	O'ahu	Jonathan Wong	O'ahu
Christine Evans	O'ahu	Brittany Murray	O'ahu
Jennifer Hudson	O'ahu	Ann Stagnaro	O'ahu
Tom Stagnaro	O'ahu	Athens p	O'ahu
Katherine Park	O'ahu	Lori Yuh	O'ahu
Kristen Hahn	O'ahu	Sandra Pepee	O'ahu
Lane Daigle	O'ahu	Marcos Cruz Ortiz	O'ahu
Claudia Moreno	O'ahu	Roy Kimura	O'ahu
Ce'Lene Sakellis	O'ahu	Aalia Meer	O'ahu
Natalie Hasegawa	O'ahu	Valline Schmidt	O'ahu
John Kojima	O'ahu	LaTrisha Granston	O'ahu
Meredith Torres	O'ahu	Franz Schnell	O'ahu
Adriann Gin	O'ahu	Christine Mitchell	O'ahu
Leticia Calles	O'ahu	Holly Elder	O'ahu
Lei-Anne Jones	O'ahu	Michael Jones	O'ahu
Nanami Jones	O'ahu	Phyllis Krajewski	O'ahu
Eduardo	O'ahu	Fiaalii Filisi	O'ahu
Rinka Shimizu	O'ahu	Debra Kaawalaule	O'ahu
Connie Lu	O'ahu	Jane George	O'ahu
Jodie Paulos	O'ahu	Fran Gendrano	O'ahu
Delmar J Bayang	O'ahu	Daniel Smith	O'ahu
Bethany Ortiz-D'Amico	O'ahu	Travis Hipolito	O'ahu
Adele Tasaka	O'ahu	Lori Watkins	O'ahu
Jayne Takaki	Statewide	Dan Fong	O'ahu
David Jones	O'ahu	Veronica Sablan	O'ahu
Mar Scott	O'ahu	Cheryl Hunt	O'ahu
Liz Okun	O'ahu	Carol Kinoshita Lau	O'ahu
Mary Ellen Rubio	O'ahu	Alexis Davidson	O'ahu
Laurie Nakama	O'ahu	Sandra Schulman	O'ahu
Kristi Hammond	O'ahu	Raisa Kakigi	O'ahu
Cindy Verdespina	O'ahu	Dale Jensen	O'ahu
michelle rainville	O'ahu	Charlene Mancusi	O'ahu

Carol Nakamura	O'ahu	Lynda Antonio	Kaua'i
Polina Dineva	O'ahu	Kaeo Kim	O'ahu
Katina Marx	O'ahu	ingrid jansson	O'ahu
Norma Murayama	O'ahu	Ginger Matusiak	O'ahu
Roger Breisch	O'ahu	Lisa Brenneman	Statewide
Carlyne Averell	Statewide	Charlotte Baker	O'ahu
Michael Baker	O'ahu	Malia Ellis	O'ahu
Charlie King	Kaua'i	John Todt	O'ahu
Nina Lum	O'ahu	Gary Rickard	O'ahu
Kim Campbell	O'ahu	Russell	O'ahu
Angeline Santos	O'ahu	Marion Berkline	O'ahu
Lorraine Asano	O'ahu	Marie Sode	O'ahu
Diane Decker	Kaua'i	Laetitia Thibault-Santoro	Statewide
Elaine Allwine-Caspers		O'ahu Lauren Long	O'ahu
Annie Green	O'ahu	Lisa Kelliher	O'ahu
Nina Jo-Ring	O'ahu	carole richelieu	O'ahu
Michelle Espinoza	O'ahu	Lisa Shandoria Johnson	O'ahu
Sandy Chen	O'ahu	Jane Arnold	O'ahu
Jessica Parayno	O'ahu	Terrie Wehrli	O'ahu
Terri Nakasone	O'ahu	Glenna Morrissey	O'ahu
Valerie Hashimoto	O'ahu	Lillian Rodolfich	O'ahu
Timothy K Blaisdell	O'ahu	Diana Kellum	O'ahu
Leslie Detor	O'ahu	Claire Narimasu	O'ahu
Angel Luong	O'ahu	Kyra Shells	O'ahu
Jaclyn Maher	O'ahu	Kathryn Kane	O'ahu
Berna Rabutan	O'ahu	Linda Estes	Kaua'i
Norman Van Vactor	Kaua'i	Maureen Copeskey	O'ahu
Tangela Manuelwatts	O'ahu	Carolyn	O'ahu
Robert and Jean Johnson	O'ahu	Stacey Hendrickson	O'ahu
Annika Seavey	O'ahu	Kekua Kobashigawa	O'ahu
Māhealani Kobashigawa	O'ahu	Margaret Reager	O'ahu
Monzell Davis	O'ahu	Christine Andrews	Maui
Bridgetmarie Kaolulo	O'ahu	Chelsea McDonough	O'ahu
Noel Shaw	O'ahu	Rik Masterson	Hawai'i
Jordan Smith	O'ahu	Lauta'amutafea Shen	O'ahu
Jenna Hausvik	O'ahu	Kailey Wilt	O'ahu
Kimberly Golis-Robello	O'ahu	Cristal Mortensen	O'ahu
Rachel Reyes-Huynh	O'ahu	Joyce Umali Perreira	O'ahu
Lori Lynn Aoki	O'ahu	Caroline Azelski	Hawai'i
Brandi Saragosa	Maui	Keith Yap	Kaua'i
Mitchell Matsumori-Kelly	O'ahu	Emma Waters	Hawai'i
Jared Kawatani	O'ahu	Julia Jay	Statewide
Mario Tabaquin	O'ahu	Elna Nagasako	O'ahu
Tayla-Angel Jimenez	O'ahu	Molly Mamaril	O'ahu
Lauren Nelson	Maui	Anne Chamness	O'ahu
Elise krause	O'ahu	Rebecca Hartman	O'ahu

Lindsay Domantay	O'ahu	Leigh Ann Lopez	O'ahu
Elizabeth Grossman	O'ahu	Genevieve Mumma	O'ahu
Cyd Hoffeld	Hawai'i	Annette Tashiro	O'ahu
An Vo	O'ahu	Christen Oliveira	O'ahu
Ariana Hansen	O'ahu	Debbie Millikan	O'ahu
Charlene Hosenfeld	O'ahu	Gayle Goodman	O'ahu
Sharon Stehlik	O'ahu	Curstyn Yoshimoto	O'ahu
U'ilani Kapuaakuni	O'ahu	Kat Saneewong	O'ahu
Emi Kaneshiro	O'ahu	Franz Schnell	O'ahu
Mae Althea Gallardo	O'ahu	Gustavo de a Pena	O'ahu
Sheri Washburn	O'ahu	Deborah Miles	O'ahu
Lisa Wong	O'ahu	Autasia Sakaria	O'ahu
Shona Petersen	O'ahu	Darlene Gaco	O'ahu
Jacqueline Mapuana	Kamehameha I	O'ahu	Scott Sonoda O'ahu
Ramon De La Cruz	Statewide	Paula T. Ortiz	O'ahu
Jane E Arnold	O'ahu	Me Manu-Lee	O'ahu
Vanessa Mamhot	O'ahu	Charlene Duplantier	O'ahu
Alan Terasako	O'ahu	Anna Gregorio	O'ahu
Jimmy Fung	O'ahu	Debra Auld	O'ahu
Ashlyn Pua Borges	O'ahu	Jane Arnold	O'ahu
Noel Shaw	O'ahu	Joyce Aquino	O'ahu
Christine Andrews	Maui	gayle goodman	O'ahu
Gustavo de la Pena	O'ahu	Ward Whipple	Maui
Ana Kia	O'ahu	Vicky Crowder	O'ahu
Lee Winter	O'ahu	Grace Sherley	O'ahu
Kyle Phillips Ramsvig	O'ahu	Taylor Ka'ili McKenzie	O'ahu
Cailey G	O'ahu		

February 16, 2026

**Testimony in Support of HB2208 HD1, Relating to Food Security**

Aloha,

My name is Anton Avanozian and I am a high school science teacher in Wailuku. **I am writing in strong support of HB2208 HD1**, which establishes the Hawaii Farm to Families Program. As a high school teacher in our community, I see firsthand how food insecurity directly impacts the ability of our keiki to learn, grow, and thrive.

The statistics cited in this bill are not just numbers to me; they represent the daily reality of my classroom. While the legislature finds that **34% of children in Hawai'i live in food-insecure homes**, I witness the personal toll this takes on students who may endure entire days without a meal. These students face increased risks of cognitive issues, anxiety, and behavioral problems that no child should have to manage while trying to get an education.

In the first semester of this school year alone, **I personally spent \$2,000 to provide food for my students**. I maintain a small stash of filling food in my classroom because I cannot ask a student to focus on a lesson when their basic need for nourishment isn't met. Teachers should not be a primary safety net for hungry children, yet we often are.

My passion for this bill also stems from the fact that our school was recently awarded a grant from the **Hawaii Child Nutrition Program** to launch a farm-to-school initiative. As it develops, this program will allow our students to connect deeply with the 'āina, learn the value of local agriculture, and gain hands-on experience with the food that sustains our islands. However, for these school-based initiatives to be truly effective and sustainable for our families, **we need systemic support like the Hawaii Farm to Families Program**. HB2208 is a vital "win-win" for our islands for several reasons:

- While our farm-to-school grant educates students on the importance of local nutrition, HB2208 ensures that their families actually have access to that same fresh, local produce at home. It ensures that the healthy habits we are building in the classroom don't stop at the school gates.
- Access to fresh, culturally relevant produce is essential for the cognitive and behavioral health of our youth. Feeding our students local food doesn't just fill their stomachs; it connects them to their land and improves their long-term health and wellness.

The **Hawaii Farm to Families Program** will provide the necessary infrastructure to ensure that fresh, local food reaches those who need it most. It is a critical step toward restoring the basic dignity of nourishment to every household in Hawai'i. Thank you for your leadership and for your consideration of this important legislation.

Sincerely,  
Anton Avanozian  
Wailuku, HI

**HB-2208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 11:49:59 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/18/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Glenn Choy	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support this bill.

**HB-2208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 1:22:45 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/18/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
tia pearson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

- [1 in 3 households in Hawai'i face food insecurity, including 34% of all children.](#)

- The partnership between local farms and food organizations benefits families in our communities and our economy.

- Also, a lot of food won't be wasted because of imperfections.

**HB-2208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 2:07:28 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/18/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
cheryl burghardt	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Committee Members,

I support HB 2208 HD1 strongly. Hunger is one of the top issues for our islands. The lines at the places giving free food gets longer each week as the need continues to grow.

The partnership between local farms and food organizations benefits families in our communities and our economy.

I ask that you support this bill.

CHeryl Burghardt

Nuuanu Oahu

**HB-2208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 2:51:58 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/18/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jessica Kuzmier	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, I am writing in support of HB2208 HD1. I fully support our food banks sourcing locally grown food for our community. Mahalo for your consideration.

**HB-2208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 5:17:38 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/18/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
An Vo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is An and I'm a public health student on O'ahu. I strongly support HB2208 HD1.

With 1 in 3 households in Hawai'i facing food insecurity, including 34% of all children, it is critical that we take action to ensure that everyone in our community has access to safe and healthy food. This bill is a win-win. It will provide critical access to fresh, culturally relevant foods for food insecure families, while also investing in local farmers and growers, who are critical to strengthening our community food systems and creating a healthier, more resilient Hawai'i.

Please support HB2208 HD1.

Mahalo,

An

Honolulu, HI

**HB-2208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 7:27:14 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/18/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nanea Lo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hello Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

My name is **Nanea Lo**, and I am writing in strong support of **HB2208 HD1**.

This measure is critically important because the **Hawai‘i Farm to Families Program** addresses multiple urgent challenges at once—food insecurity, support for local farmers, and climate resilience. By providing access to fresh, locally grown food for families facing food insecurity, the program strengthens Hawai‘i’s community food systems while reducing our reliance on imported food.

One in three households in Hawai‘i experiences food insecurity, with our most vulnerable populations bearing the greatest burden. Many families struggle to put food on the table consistently, and rising costs have only intensified this hardship. HB2208 HD1 helps ensure that nutritious, fresh produce reaches those who need it most, directly alleviating hunger and improving health outcomes.

At the same time, this measure invests in local agriculture and supports Hawai‘i farmers, keeping resources within our local economy and strengthening long-term food resiliency. By reducing the need to import food, we also avoid the greenhouse gas emissions associated with shipping, making this bill an important climate solution as well.

HB2208 HD1 represents a triple win for Hawai‘i—supporting families, uplifting farmers, and advancing our climate goals. For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to support this measure.

me ke aloha ‘āina,

Nanea Lo, 96826

Sierra Club of Hawai‘i Member

Hawai‘i Workers Center Board Member

Honolulu Tenants Union Member

350 Hawai‘i Member

Carbon Cashback Hawai'i Member

Hawai'i Tax Fairness Coalition Member

**HB-2208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 7:38:33 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/18/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Shannon Rudolph	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support

**HB-2208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 7:41:14 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/18/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kathy Shimata	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The Hawai'i Farm to Families Program provides access to fresh food for food insecure families, while investing in local farmers and strengthening our community food systems--resulting in less food needing to be imported. In doing so, we fight hunger and the climate crisis at the same time!

I urge you to support HB2208.

Mahalo,

Kathy Shimata

**HB-2208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 8:45:51 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/18/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
jeanne wheeler	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha:we very much need this bill to be passed - please do so ! Mahalo, JW

**HB-2208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 9:07:20 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/18/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Shay Chan Hodges	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill, which would establish and appropriate funds for a Farm to Families program, allowing food banks to purchase locally grown produce.

Mahalo.

**HB-2208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 9:25:42 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/18/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Mina Ellison	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha mai respected leaders of Hawai'i,

Please support HB 2208 HD1. The statistics around food insecurity in Hawai'i are staggering. One in three households in Hawaii report experiencing food insecurity. Nearly half (46%) of ALICE households lack consistent access to food. Increasing the ability of food banks to purchase locally grown food is a win-win for our communities and farmers. One major challenge local farmers face is access to markets. This will help grow our local food and agriculture economy while providing our communities with nutritious food. As the cost of imports continues to increase, investing in our local food economy will help bolster our local production and food security in the long term.

Preparing Hawai'i's families in the wake of disaster, food banks rely almost exclusively on private donations and grants, even though local governments rely heavily on them during times of crisis. The Farm to Families program would provide funding for purchasing from local farmers, improving emergency food access for families and opening up a local market for farmers during times of economic crisis.

Mahalo for your time and consideration,

Mina Ellison, Ke'ei, Kona, Hawai'i

**HB-2208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 10:33:32 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/18/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Nicholas Zehr	Individual	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on HB2208. No one can read the findings of this bill without recognizing the seriousness of food insecurity in Hawai‘i. When families skip meals and keiki go entire days without eating, the issue is not abstract, it is immediate and human. Strengthening connections between local farmers and food banks is a constructive response that addresses both hunger and agricultural resilience.

The concept behind the Hawaii Farm to Families Program has merit. Purchasing fresh, Hawai‘i-grown food for distribution through existing food banks can:

- Improve nutritional quality for families in need;
- Provide stable markets for local producers;
- Keep dollars circulating in our local economy; and
- Reduce long-term dependence on imported food.

However, to ensure this program fulfills its promise while respecting taxpayers and community partners, I respectfully offer the following considerations:

1. Fiscal Transparency and Measurable Outcomes

Appropriated funds should be tied to clear, publicly reported performance metrics, such as pounds of local produce purchased, number of households served, cost per meal delivered, and

measurable health or food access outcomes. Transparent reporting will build public trust and allow the Legislature to evaluate cost-effectiveness relative to alternative approaches.

## 2. Guard Against Market Distortion

While supporting local farmers is a worthy goal, care should be taken to avoid unintentionally crowding out private markets or favoring certain producers over others. Grant criteria should be neutral, competitive, and structured to avoid creating long-term dependency on state purchasing.

## 3. Administrative

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## 2. Guard Against Market Distortion

While supporting local farmers is a worthy goal, care should be taken to avoid unintentionally crowding out private markets or favoring certain producers over others. Grant criteria should be neutral, competitive, and structured to avoid creating long-term dependency on state purchasing.

## 3. Administrative Efficiency

The bill creates a new program within the Department of Human Services. The Legislature should ensure that administrative overhead remains minimal and that funds flow primarily to food acquisition and distribution—not bureaucracy. Leveraging existing food bank infrastructure is a strength; maintaining that lean model will be key.

## 4. Sunset or Review Mechanism

Given the scale of the appropriation, the Legislature may wish to include a sunset clause or structured reauthorization requirement. Periodic review ensures the program remains effective, accountable, and aligned with evolving community needs.

Hawai‘i’s long-term food security will ultimately depend not only on public programs, but also on policies that lower barriers for farmers, reduce regulatory burdens, expand access to land and water, and allow community-based solutions to flourish. HB2208 can be a constructive part of that broader effort if implemented with strong accountability and fiscal discipline.

With thoughtful amendments to ensure transparency, efficiency, and measurable results, this bill can support vulnerable families while strengthening our local food system.

Mahalo for your consideration.

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Hawai‘i’s long-term food security will ultimately depend not only on public programs, but also on policies that lower barriers for farmers, reduce regulatory burdens, expand access to land and water, and allow community-based solutions to flourish. HB2208 can be a constructive part of that broader effort if implemented with strong accountability and fiscal discipline.

With thoughtful amendments to ensure transparency, efficiency, and measurable results, this bill can support vulnerable families while strengthening our local food system. Mahalo for your consideration.

To: Representative Cory M. Chun, Chair  
Representative Matthias Kusch, Vice Chair  
Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems

From: Veronica Moore, Individual Citizen

Date: February 17, 2026

RE: House Bill 2208 HD1  
Measure Title: RELATING TO FOOD SECURITY.  
Report Title: DHS; Food Security; Hawai'i Farm to Families Program; Grants;  
Reports; Appropriation (\$)

To All Concerned,

My name is Veronica Moore and I support House Bill 2208 HD1. Thank you for introducing this bill.

Sincerely,

Veronica M. Moore

**HB-2208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 8:26:09 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/18/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jade Santos	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**2/17/26**

**Testimony in Support of Farm to Families**

**Aloha,**

**My name is Jade Santos and I am a educator at Wahiawa Elementary.**

**I am writing in strong support of Farm to Families.**

**With 1 in 3 households in Hawai'i facing food insecurity, including 34% of all children, it is critical that we take action to ensure that everyone in our community has access to safe and healthy food. This bill is a win-win. It will provide critical access to fresh, culturally relevant foods for food insecure families, while also investing in local farmers and growers, who are critical to strengthening our community food systems and creating a healthier, more resilient Hawai'i.**

**The partnership between local farms and food organizations benefits families in our communities and our economy by:**

- 1. Strengthening Hawai'i's Food Supply Chain: By investing in local agriculture, we reduce our dependence on imported goods, creating a more resilient and sustainable food system for Hawai'i.**
- 1. Supporting Local Farmers: The bill offers a direct benefit to Hawai'i's agricultural sector, providing a steady and fair market for local produce. Farmers can plan for future growth knowing their products will feed their neighbors in need.**
- 1. Enhancing Nutritional Access: Fresh, local produce provides essential nutrients to individuals and families who may otherwise lack access to healthy food options. This not only fights hunger but also promotes long-term health and wellness in our communities.**

**Thank you for your leadership and commitment to our shared vision of a thriving, food-secure Hawai'i. I am deeply grateful for your consideration of this important legislation.**

**Thank you,**

**Jade Santos**

**Wahiawa**

The Office of Dr. Joseph Keawe`aimoku Kaholokula

February 17, 2026

Re: Support for the "Farm to Families" bill

Aloha nui,

I am Dr. Joseph Keawe`aimoku Kaholokula, a Hawai`i licensed clinical psychologist and professor and chair of Native Hawaiian Health at the John A. Burns School of Medicine, University of Hawai`i at Mānoa.

As a health disparities researcher, I know firsthand the negative impact food insecurity has on the health and well-being of people in Hawai`i, especially among Native Hawaiians, Pacific Islanders, and other medically underserved populations. This is why I am writing with **an urgent request for your support of the "Farm to Families" bill, a pivotal piece of legislation that has the potential to transform our state's food security landscape.** This bill will allow food-distributing organizations to strengthen their partnerships with local farmers and food producers, ensuring that fresh, locally grown produce reaches families facing food insecurity.

The partnership between local farms and food organizations benefits families in our communities and our economy in several ways. First, it **strengthens Hawai`i's food supply chain** by investing in local agriculture, thereby reducing our dependence on imported goods and creating a more resilient and sustainable food system for Hawai`i. Second, by **supporting local farmers**, there can be a direct benefit to Hawai`i's agricultural sector, providing a steady and fair market for local produce. Farmers can plan for future growth knowing their products will feed their neighbors in need. Finally, by **enhancing nutritional access**, fresh, local produce will provide essential nutrients to individuals and families who may otherwise lack access to healthy food options. This bill will help fight hunger and promote long-term health and wellness in our communities.

Mahalo nui for your leadership and commitment to our shared vision of a thriving, food-secure Hawai`i. I am deeply grateful for your consideration of this important legislation and stand ready to collaborate with you in any way that may be helpful.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joseph K. Keawe`aimoku Kaholokula". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and a long, sweeping underline.

Joseph Keawe`aimoku Kaholokula, Ph.D.

**HB-2208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 8:33:55 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/18/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Deborah Millikan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**Testimony in Strong Support of Farm to Families**

**Aloha Chair Chun, Vice Chair Kusch and Members of the Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems**

**My name is Debbie Millikan and I live in District 20, Kaimuki.**

**I am writing in strong SUPPORT of HB2208 HD1 Farm to Families.**

**With 1 in 3 households in Hawai'i facing food insecurity, including 34% of all children, it is critical that we take action to ensure that everyone in our community has access to safe and healthy food. This bill is a win-win. It will provide critical access to fresh, culturally relevant foods for food insecure families, while also investing in local farmers and growers, who are critical to strengthening our community food systems and creating a healthier, more resilient Hawai'i.**

**The partnership between local farms and food organizations benefits families in our communities and our economy by:**

- 1. Strengthening Hawai'i's Food Supply Chain: By investing in local agriculture, we reduce our dependence on imported goods, creating a more resilient and sustainable food system for Hawai'i.**

1. **Supporting Local Farmers:** The bill offers a direct benefit to Hawai'i's agricultural sector, providing a steady and fair market for local produce. Farmers can plan for future growth knowing their products will feed their neighbors in need.
1. **Enhancing Nutritional Access:** Fresh, local produce provides essential nutrients to individuals and families who may otherwise lack access to healthy food options. This not only fights hunger but also promotes long-term health and wellness in our communities.

**Thank you for your leadership and commitment to our shared vision of a thriving, food-secure Hawai'i. I am deeply grateful for your consideration of this important legislation.**

**Thank you,**

**Debbie**

**Honolulu, HI**

**HB-2208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 9:09:53 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/18/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Molly Mamaril	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is Molly Mamaril from Kaimuki, O‘ahu and I am writing in strong support of Farm to Families.

With 1 in 3 households in Hawai‘i facing food insecurity, including 34% of all children, it is critical that we take action to ensure that everyone in our community has access to safe and healthy food. This bill is a win-win. It will provide critical access to fresh, culturally relevant foods for food insecure families, while also investing in local farmers and growers, who are critical to strengthening our community food systems and creating a healthier, more resilient Hawai‘i.

The partnership between local farms and food organizations benefits families in our communities and our economy by:

1. **Strengthening Hawai‘i’s Food Supply Chain:** By investing in local agriculture, we reduce our dependence on imported goods, creating a more resilient and sustainable food system for Hawai‘i.
1. **Supporting Local Farmers:** The bill offers a direct benefit to Hawai‘i’s agricultural sector, providing a steady and fair market for local produce. Farmers can plan for future growth knowing their products will feed their neighbors in need.
1. **Enhancing Nutritional Access:** Fresh, local produce provides essential nutrients to individuals and families who may otherwise lack access to healthy food options. This not only fights hunger but also promotes long-term health and wellness in our communities.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to our shared vision of a thriving, food-secure Hawai‘i. I am grateful for your consideration of this important legislation.

Mahalo,

Molly Mamaril

Kaimukī, O‘ahu





# Maui Food Bank

## Aloha Backpack Buddies Program (ABB)



February 4, 2026

Aloha :)

My name is Addie Ann Texeira-Browne and I am the Aloha Backpack Buddies Program Coordinator for Maui Food Bank.

I am writing today with an urgent request for your support of the "Farm to Families" bill. This is a pivotal piece of legislation that has the potential to transform our state's food security landscape. This bill will allow food distributing organizations to strengthen their partnerships with local farmers and food producers, ensuring that fresh, locally grown produce reaches families facing food insecurity.

The partnership between local farms and food organizations benefits families in our communities and our economy by:

1. **Strengthening Hawai'i's Food Supply Chain:** By investing in local agriculture, we reduce our dependence on imported goods, creating a more resilient and sustainable food system for Hawai'i.
2. **Supporting Local Farmers:** The bill offers a direct benefit to Hawai'i's agricultural sector, providing a steady and fair market for local produce. Farmers can plan for future growth knowing their products will feed their neighbors in need.
3. **Enhancing Nutritional Access:** Fresh, local produce provides essential nutrients to individuals and families who may otherwise lack access to healthy food options. This not only fights hunger but also promotes long-term health and wellness in our communities.

Every time I visit a school in Maui County I am thanked for supplying food to cover our keiki over the weekend and other days when school is closed. I know that many times breakfast and lunch at school are the only times that students eat that day. There are persistent requests from students and parents to have more healthy options, like fresh fruit and vegetables to go with the shelf stable food that is offered for them to take home through the Aloha Backpack Buddies Program. It only makes sense to support local farmers and feed those in need. It is a win win. Maui can do better and we should!

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to our shared vision of a thriving, food-secure Hawai'i. I am deeply grateful for your consideration of this important legislation and stand ready to collaborate with you in any way that may be helpful.

Thank you,

*Addie Ann Texeira-Browne*

Addie Ann Texeira-Browne

Kula, Maui

Aloha Backpack Buddies Program Coordinator

Maui Food Bank

Cell: (808) 303-7068

Email: [addie@mauifoodbank.org](mailto:addie@mauifoodbank.org)

**Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot,  
nothing is going to get better. It's not. - Dr. Seuss**

**LATE**

**HB-2208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 11:13:34 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/18/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kathryn Braun	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

**I am writing in strong support of Farm to Families.** I am a long-time teacher with the Hawai'i system testifying as an individual.

As a teacher, I have witnessed food insecurity among my students. And every year, I donate to various food banks. I know the money is helpful, but I worry that food banks so not have good access to fresh foods, especially produce.

It is critical that we take action to ensure that everyone in our community has access to safe and healthy food. This bill is a win-win. It will provide critical access to fresh, culturally relevant foods for food insecure families, while also investing in local farmers and growers, who are critical to strengthening our community food systems and creating a healthier, more resilient Hawai'i.

Thank you,

Kathryn Braun, Punchbowl

**LATE**

**HB-2208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 2:49:46 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/18/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Benjamin Narwold	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

--One in three households in Hawai‘i faces food insecurity, and our most vulnerable populations need our support. This critical measure ensures fresh, locally grown produce reaches families facing food insecurity, and helps alleviate hunger.

--Many families in Hawai‘i struggle to put food on the table on a consistent basis. HB2208 HD1 is an important step toward reducing hunger in our islands. Efforts to invest in local agriculture and support our farmers builds Hawaii’s resiliency, and avoids the greenhouse gases that would have been emitted from shipping in food. HB2208 HD1 is a triple win for our families, our farmers, and our climate!

**LATE**

**HB-2208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 4:37:27 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/18/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Randy Cabral	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Strong support

**LATE**

**HB-2208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 8:03:20 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/18/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jason Moniz	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**HB 2208, HD1 – HAWAI‘I FARM TO FAMILIES PROGRAM**

HEARING BEFORE THE  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS  
February 18, 2026

I support HB 2208, HD1, which establishes the Hawai‘i Farm to Families Program within the Department of Human Services to address food insecurity while supporting local farmers and ranchers.

Hawai‘i continues to face serious food insecurity challenges. At the same time, local producers struggle with high costs, unstable markets, and limited access to consistent buyers. This program connects locally grown food with families and community feeding programs in need.

Farm to Families creates a reliable market for Hawai‘i farmers and ranchers while increasing access to fresh, nutritious, locally grown food. It strengthens our local food system, keeps food dollars in Hawai‘i, and improves food security across the state.

Please support HB 2208, HD1.

**LATE**

**HB-2208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 10:27:16 PM  
Testimony for AGR on 2/18/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Tonya Lee Coulter	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a farmer, small business owner and mother in Hawaii I strongly support this bill.