

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 24, 2026

TO: The Honorable Representative Chris Todd, Chair  
House Committee on Finance

FROM: Ryan I. Yamane, Director

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

Hearing: February 26, 2026, 2:00 p.m.  
Conference Room 308 & Videoconference, 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 the Department to alleviate food shortages in the State.

In addition to the amount required for grant funds, should this measure continue to proceed, DHS will require additional resources to administer the program as proposed, and at a minimum, one (1) full-time equivalent program specialist position that would require a general fund appropriation to oversee the statewide coordination of services that would include development of administrative rules, procurement development and execution, and contract monitoring. The Department will continue to update its testimony with the resource needs for implementation as this bill progresses. 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. In

the past, DHS has also facilitated grants 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.

For the committee’s information, beginning in federal fiscal year 2028 and continuing annually, OBBBA authorized a new cost-share model for SNAP benefits tied to payment error rates. Currently, the SNAP benefit is 100% federally funded and the OBBBA cost-share will require states to pay a percentage of the SNAP benefit. Specifically, states with a payment error rate of 6% or higher, based on their payment error rate from either federal fiscal year 2025 or 2026 (states choose which year's error rate to use as the baseline), will be required to state-fund a percentage of total SNAP benefits.

Hawaii currently issues roughly \$660 million in SNAP benefits annually. Using this annual amount as an estimate, the percentage tiering for Hawaii would be the following:

**Table 1. Cost Share for SNAP Benefits by payment error rate, beginning federal fiscal year 2028.**

Payment Error Rate	Cost Share for SNAP Benefits	
	% of State Cost Share for SNAP	Est. Annual Amount to be paid by Hawaii
<6%	0%	\$0
6-7.99%	5%	\$33,000,000
8-9.99%	10%	\$66,000,000
10% or above	15%	\$99,000,000

For the federal fiscal year 2024, DHS had a payment error rate of 6.68%. This is the most recent official and final federal fiscal year error rate published by the United States Department of Agriculture, Food & Nutrition Services. DHS achieved this by streamlining and solidifying certain processes, thereby stabilizing the overall eligibility process. Although we continue to work to lower the payment error rate, some OBBBA changes took effect on July 4, 2025, the date OBBBA was signed, and we anticipate payment errors. Understanding the

financial magnitude a high error rate would have for the State, the Department will continue to prioritize lowering our payment error rate as our top on-going priority for SNAP.

Lastly, the Department requests an extended effective date to draft and adopt administrative rules that would allow grant submissions in accordance with this new program and to identify and acquire resources needed to implement this measure.

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  
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February 24, 2026

HEARING BEFORE THE  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Thursday, February 26 2026  
2:00 PM  
CONFERENCE ROOM 308

TESTIMONY ON HB 2208 HD1 Relating to Food Security

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

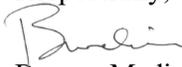
I am Benson Medina, Director of the Department of Research and Development, County of Hawai'i. One of the agricultural objectives of this department is to support collaboration, innovation, resource development, and programmatic sustainability throughout the food system to reduce food waste, improve 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

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)

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 FINANCE  
**Thursday, February 26, 2026, 2:00 PM**  
**Conference RM 308 and Via Videoconference**

TO: Rep. Chris Todd, Chair, Rep. Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair, and Members of the  
Committee on Finance

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.

**HB-2208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 1:08:55 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
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

**OFFICE OF ECONOMIC REVITALIZATION  
KE KE'ENA HO'OMOHALA WAIWAI  
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU**

711 KAPIOLANI BLVD., 12TH FLOOR • HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813  
PHONE: (808) 768-2330 • FAX: (808) 768-4242 • WEBSITE: [revitalizeoahu.org](http://revitalizeoahu.org)

RICK BLANGIARDI  
MAYOR  
MEIA



AMY ASSELBAYE  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
PO'O HO'OKO

DEBORAH ZYSMAN  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR  
HOPE PO'O

February 26, 2026

The Honorable Chris Todd, Chair  
The Honorable Jenna Takenouchi, Vice-Chair  
and Members of the Committee on Finance  
House of Representatives  
415 South Beretania Street, Room 308  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

SUBJECT: Honolulu Office of Economic Revitalization Support for House Bill 2208 HD1  
Relating to Food Security

Dear Chair Todd, Vice-Chair Takenouchi, and members of the Committee:

The City and County of Honolulu's Office of Economic Revitalization (OER) **supports** House Bill 2208 which pertains to increased funding for the Farm to Families program. The purpose of this bill is to establish appropriate funds for the Hawai'i Farm to Families Program under the Department of Human Services to alleviate food shortages in the State.

According to the Hawai'i Foodbank 2025 Food Insecurity Report, thirty-two percent (32%) of all households in Hawai'i are food insecure, including 34% of all children. In 11% of households, children report going hungry. Providing support for the Farm to Families program is crucial in reducing food insecurity rates and enhancing community resilience. By increasing investment into locally grown foods for distribution to households, the program improves access to fresh and nutritious meals for families while also supporting Hawai'i farmers and producers.

OER's Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems program is focused on increasing local food production. By strengthening our agricultural industry, we not only increase food security—we also honor our responsibility to care for the land, support local farmers and businesses, and create greater access to high-quality, Hawai'i-made products for residents and visitors.

Should you have any questions, please contact Alex Narrajos, Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems Program Manager at (808) 768-2287 or via email at [alex.narrajos@honolulu.gov](mailto:alex.narrajos@honolulu.gov).

Sincerely,

Amy Asselbaye  
Executive Director



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Mason Scharer  
Haleakalā, Maui

Kaiea Medeiros  
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Maui

Kaipo Kekona  
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Negus Manna  
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North Shore, O'ahu

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Rachel LaDrig  
Waimānalo, O'ahu

Vincent Kimura  
Honolulu, O'ahu

Natalie Urminska  
Kaua'i

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

The Hawai'i Farmers Union is a 501(c)(5) agricultural advocacy nonprofit representing a network of over 2,500 family farmers and their supporters across the Hawaiian Islands. **HFU strongly supports HB2208.**

HB2208 is a transformative measure to alleviate immediate hunger and grow the agricultural economy while building long-term community resilience.

Recent data shows a staggering one in three households in Hawai'i faces food insecurity. HB2208 establishes the Hawai'i Farm to Families Program to bridge the gap between local farms and those in need. By facilitating the **consistent procurement of fresh, nutritious food**, this program provides an immediate lifeline to our state's most vulnerable populations.

For Hawai'i's farmers to thrive and scale, they need market stability. By ensuring a stable and predictable demand for locally sourced products, the program **keeps public dollars circulating within the local economy**. This gives our agricultural producers the financial certainty they need to expand operations, create jobs, and strengthen the state's overall food self-sufficiency.

Perhaps most importantly, HB2208 **builds a more diversified emergency food network** capable of pivoting between Hawai'i-grown and imported goods. By investing in the cold storage and transportation essential for local food distribution, the program reduces our dependence on global shipping as a sole supply source.

This procurement infrastructure **creates a resilient safety net** that can adapt to changing conditions. Whether facing a global supply chain disruption or a local natural disaster, HB2208 guarantees that Hawai'i's people remain fed by establishing a system that functions effectively even when external or internal supply chains are compromised.

HB2208 is more than a hunger relief bill; it is a strategic investment in the long-term resilience of our community, the economic viability of our local farmers, and the food security of every Hawai'i family.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Hunter Heavilin  
Advocacy Director  
Hawai'i Farmers Union



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

February 26, 2026

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

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, 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 HD1 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



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 26, 2026

HEARING BEFORE THE  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

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

Conference Room 308 & Videoconference  
2:00 PM

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

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

**The Hawai'i Farm Bureau supports HB 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.

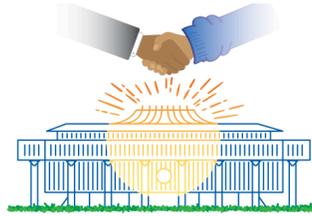
Since 2020, HFB has partnered with Hawai'i's food banks to help source fresh, locally grown food for community distribution. Through these partnerships, the Hawai'i Foodbank, Maui Food Bank, Kaua'i Foodbank, and the Hawai'i Island Food Basket work with hundreds of agency partners statewide to distribute 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.



## CLIMATE FUTURE FORUM



**Serena, Chelsey**  
King Kekaulike High School

**Arianna**  
Mililani High School

**Keanu**  
Kamehameha Schools Maui

**Alvis, Alliyannah, Jaden**  
Maui High School

**Mia**  
Kalani High School

**Seuta'atia, Henrik, Irene, Andrew, Sijin, Desiree**  
'Iolani School

**Kaylie**  
Honoka'a High School

**Leilani, Janey**  
Mid-Pacific Institute

**An**  
Hawai'i Pacific University

**Vivienne, Leila, Brayden, Madison**  
UH Mānoa

**Christopher, Maile, Meridian, Jessica, Maya, Erika, Chelsea**  
Punahou School

**Joleena**  
Maryknoll School

**Gabriel**  
Lāna'i High School

To: Rep. Todd, Chair  
Rep. Takenouchi, Vice Chair  
Members of the Committee on Finance

Hearing: 02/26/2026, 2:00pm

From: Climate Future Forum, Hawai'i Youth Food Council

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

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and members of the Committee on Finance,

We are youth leaders from the Hawai'i Climate Future Forum, a youth-led organization bringing together young people across the islands to address key climate issues, and the Hawai'i Youth Food Council (HYFC), a youth-led council empowering high school and college students to engage in food systems advocacy and education. On behalf of the Climate Future Forum's Regenerative Food Systems Working Group and HYFC, we respectfully submit this **joint youth testimony in strong support of HB2208 HD1**.

HB2208 is a response to a crisis: one in three households in Hawai'i struggles to secure consistent access to food, and many families are skipping meals or going whole days without eating. From a youth climate and food systems perspective, this is a systems-level crisis. The same communities that are on the frontlines of climate change also experience the highest levels of food insecurity.

Farm to Families can support farming practices that can improve soil health, reduce emissions associated with long-distance imports, and maintain agro-biodiversity that is necessary for climate resilience.

This is the kind of structural investment that moves us away from a semi-functioning reactive emergency model toward a truly regenerative food system.

As youth working in climate action and food systems, we see Farm to Families as a model policy that simultaneously addresses food insecurity, supports local farmers, and strengthens Hawai'i's capacity to withstand future disruptions. HB2208 helps create a Hawai'i where every family has consistent access to locally grown food, and where our food system itself is part of our climate solution instead of a vulnerability.

For these reasons, the Climate Future Forum Regenerative Food Systems Working Group Youth Policy Leaders and the Hawai'i Youth Food Council are in **strong support of HB2208 HD1** and respectfully urge the Committee to pass this measure.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

*The Hawai'i Youth Food Council*

*& The Youth Leaders of the Climate Future Forum Regenerative Food Systems Working Group*



Hawaii Cattlemen's Council, Inc.

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

**HB2208 HD1**  
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Thursday, February 26, 2026, 2:00 PM  
Conference Room 308 & Videoconference

Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, 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



**HB-2208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 10:48:28 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

<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:

As a long-time farmer it is my hope that programs are in place to ensure that local residents are fed local food and support local farms.

This program meets those goals and I ask for your support.

Thank you in advance,

Colehour Bondera

KANALANI OHANA FARM

Honaunau, HI



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

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February 24, 2026

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

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

On behalf of Agriculture Stewardship Hawai'i, we strongly support HB 2208, Relating to Food Security, which establishes and funds the Hawai'i Farm to Families Program within the Department of Human Services to address food shortages and require legislative reporting.

Agriculture Stewardship Hawai'i is a nonprofit organization dedicated to strengthening the viability of Hawai'i's farmers and ranchers through technical assistance, resource coordination, business education, and policy support. In our daily work across the state, we see the stark reality of food insecurity—including among those who grow and produce our food. **Nationally, food system workers are more than twice as likely as workers in other sectors to rely on SNAP and other food assistance.** The people feeding our communities are too often struggling to feed their own families.

HB 2208 represents a fiscally responsible, high-impact investment. The Farm to Families Program addresses food insecurity while supporting local producers, keeping state dollars circulating in Hawai'i's economy, sustaining local jobs, and strengthening supply chain resilience. These funds generate multiplier effects across producers, distributors, food hubs, and communities—while reducing reliance on imported food and external supply chains. Embedding and expanding this program within core state operations ensures stability, accountability, and measurable outcomes.

**With roughly one in three Hawai'i households experiencing food insecurity, strategic investments like this are both urgent and prudent.** HB 2208 advances a smart, win-win approach that strengthens families, stabilizes agricultural businesses, and builds long-term economic resilience.

Mahalo for your leadership and commitment to Hawai'i's farmers, food workers, and communities. We respectfully urge your support for HB 2208.

Warm wishes,

Dr. Amanda Shaw, PhD, Statewide Food Systems Coordinator

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

Tel: 808 429 5310

*Agriculture Stewardship Hawai'i is a DBA of:  
O'ahu Resource Conservation and Development Council, a 501c3 Nonprofit Corporation*

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 2208 HD1  
RELATING TO FOOD SECURITY

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

From: Rona Yagi Fukumoto, President and CEO

Date: Wednesday, February 25, 2026

On behalf of Lanakila Pacific, I am testifying in **strong support of HB 2208 HD1**, which appropriates funds in the form of grants for the Hawaii Farm to Families Program to alleviate food shortages in the state. As a safety net provider of food for seniors and people with disabilities through the Lanakila Meals on Wheels Program, Lanakila Pacific supports the request to increase funding that will strengthen the local food system.

A strong local food supply chain will be more resilient when tested by disaster. The community will need local producers to feed residents when supplies are cut off due to a natural disaster, man-made disaster, or government shutdown. That said, to be effective, the emergency food system must have a foundation in the continually operating local food system. What better way than to support local farms which in turn work with community-based organizations to feed families that are food insecure.

At Lanakila Pacific, our mission is to build independence and an improved quality of life for individuals with cognitive, physical, social or age-related challenges. Throughout our 87-year history, we provided job training, work experience, and support for jobseekers with disabilities as well as nutrition programs to allow people to live independently. Working and being independent is extremely difficult if you are hungry.

HB 2208 HD1 is a step toward ensuring resilience in many sectors of support. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. Please contact me at 808-356-8569 or [rfukumoto@lanakilapacific.org](mailto:rfukumoto@lanakilapacific.org) if you have any questions.

To: House Committee on Finance  
Re: **HB2208 HD1 – Relating to Food Security**  
Hawai'i State Capitol & Via Videoconference  
February 26, 2026, 2:00 PM

Dear Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, 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>



## 'Ahahui o nā Kauka

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### 2025-2026 Advocacy Committee

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February 24, 2026

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## 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.



# 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 Finance  
Thursday, February 26, 2026, at 2:00PM

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Dear Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, 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. This legislation is a small investment that would go a long way in strengthening 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>



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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 Finance**  
**Thursday, February 26, 2026 – 2:00 PM**  
**Testimony in Strong Support of HB2208 HD1 — Relating to Food Security**

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

My name is Bev Brody, and I am submitting testimony on behalf of Get Fit Kauai, a countywide Healthy Eating Active Living coalition dedicated to improving the health and well-being of Kaua'i residents. I am writing in strong support of HB2208 HD1, which establishes and funds the Farm to Families program under the Department of Human Services.

Food insecurity continues to affect far too many Hawai'i households, with families struggling to access fresh, nutritious foods that support long-term health. At the same time, our local farmers face ongoing challenges in securing stable, predictable markets for their crops. HB2208 HD1 addresses both issues with one smart, community-centered solution.

By enabling food banks to purchase locally grown produce, this bill:

- Strengthens Hawaii's food system by keeping food dollars circulating locally and reducing reliance on imports.
- Supports local farmers with consistent demand and fair purchasing agreements that allow them to plan, grow, and thrive.
- Improves community health by ensuring that families facing hardship have access to fresh, culturally relevant foods.

This program is not only practical — it is deeply aligned with our statewide goals of food security, agricultural resilience, and community health. It invests in our people, our farmers, and our future.

On behalf of Get Fit Kauai, I respectfully urge the Committee to pass HB2208 HD1.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

*B Brody*

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



401 Uluniu St. #311 Kailua, HI 96734 | info@hawaiigoodfoodalliance.org

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB2208 HD1: Farm to Families**  
**House Committee on Finance**  
**Hearing Date: Thursday, February 26, 2026 at 2:00 PM**

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

My name is Kat Saneewong, and I serve as the Farmers Market Program Navigator with the **Hawai'i Good Food Alliance**. I am writing in strong support of **HB2208 HD1**, the **Farm to Families bill**, which addresses food insecurity in our state by expanding access to fresh, locally grown food while strengthening Hawai'i's agricultural economy

HB2208 HD1 strengthens the Hawai'i Farm to Families Program and represents a thoughtful investment in both community food access and local agricultural stability. Hawai'i continues to face elevated rates of food insecurity while farmers navigate rising input costs and uncertain market conditions. This measure addresses both challenges in a coordinated and fiscally responsible way. By advancing this program, the Legislature will:

- **Create Reliable Market Opportunities for Hawai'i Farmers** – Consistent procurement through Farm to Families provides growers with dependable demand, helping stabilize farm income and supporting long-term operational planning. Strengthening local markets keeps agricultural production viable and preserves critical farmland resources across the state.
- **Expand Access to Nutritious, Locally Grown Food** – Families experiencing food insecurity gain increased access to fresh, culturally appropriate produce grown here in Hawai'i. Improving availability of nutritious food contributes to better health outcomes and supports community well-being.
- **Reinforce Hawai'i's Food System Infrastructure** – Strategic investment in local sourcing and distribution reduces reliance on imported food and builds stronger in-state supply networks. Strengthening these systems now improves resilience against future economic or supply disruptions.

At the Hawai'i Good Food Alliance, we work with farmers and community partners statewide to strengthen our local food system. We have seen how farm-to-community programs connect families, kūpuna, and keiki with fresh, Hawai'i-grown food while supporting farmer viability. HB2208 HD1 builds on this progress and moves our state toward a more resilient and food-secure future.

Mahalo for your leadership and commitment to food security and agricultural sustainability.

Respectfully,

Kat Saneewong  
Farmers Market Program Navigator  
Hawai'i Good Food Alliance





**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'anāe Coast  
Comprehensive Health Center

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

## House Committee on Finance

Thursday, February 26, 2026, at 2:00PM

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

Dear Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, 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 provide additional funding for 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.

**They are doing this with already stretched and limited resources—relying heavily on private donations and grants—while also facing recent cuts to federal funding.**

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 guarantees that nutritious food is available to more families, supporting local farmers, and even reducing farm food waste across the islands.

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

With aloha,  
Hawai'i Hunger Action Network membership





## CATHOLIC CHARITIES HAWAI'I

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

TO: House Committee on Finance  
FROM: Betty Lou Larson, Legislative Liaison, Catholic Charities Hawai'i  
Hearing: Thursday, 2/26/26; 2:00 PM. CR 308 & Videoconference

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members, Committee on Finance:

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 local agriculture. 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.





**To: Committee on Finance**

**Hearing Date/Time: Thursday, February 26, 2026**

**Re: Testimony in Strong Support of HB2208**

**From: Andrew Ogata, Hawai'i Health & Harm Reduction Center**

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

My name is Andrew Ogata, and I am submitting testimony on behalf of the Hawai'i Health & Harm Reduction Center (H3RC) in strong support of HB 2208.

Food insecurity continues to be one of the most pressing issues facing the communities we serve. Many of our clients are already dealing with housing instability, chronic health conditions, and limited income. When access to food is unreliable, everything else becomes harder. Managing health, staying housed, and even showing up for services can quickly fall apart when people are skipping meals or going days without eating.

H3RC provides low-barrier, harm reduction–based services to the LGBTQIA+ community, individuals living with or affected by HIV, hepatitis, substance use, mental illness, and homelessness. Food access is a consistent need we see across all of our programs. It is not just about hunger. It directly affects health outcomes, medication adherence, and overall stability.

We have partnered with the Hawai'i Foodbank for many years to help address this need. During the pandemic, we helped distribute more than 500,000 pounds of food across O'ahu. Today, even with fewer emergency supports in place, demand remains extremely high. We currently distribute over 140,000 pounds of food each year, and the need continues to grow.

HB 2208 is an important step toward addressing food insecurity in a sustainable way. By supporting food banks' ability to purchase and distribute fresh, Hawai'i-grown food, this bill improves access to nutritious food for families while also supporting local farmers and strengthening our local food system. This kind of investment helps communities now and builds resilience for the future.

We respectfully urge the Committee to support HB 2208.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Andrew Ogata  
Director of Marketing & Development  
Hawai'i Health & Harm Reduction Center



**Chair Todd**  
**Vice Chair Takenouchi**  
**House Committee on Finance**

**Thursday, February 26th, 2026**  
**2:00 pm**

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

Aloha Members of the House Committee on Finance,

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)



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**Eddie Asato**, Pint Size Hawaii, *Advisor*  
**Gary Okimoto**, Safeway, *Advisor*  
**Maile Miyashiro**, C&S Wholesale, *Immediate Past Chair*

TO: Committee on Finance  
FROM: HAWAII FOOD INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION  
Lauren Zirbel, Executive Director

DATE: February 26, 2026

TIME: 2pm

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.

**HB-2208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 5:29:53 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nanette Kahalaomapuana Aquino	Na Kia'i O Maui	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

February 25, 2026

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Honorable Committee Members,

My name is **Nettie Aquino, Executive Director/Founder**. I am testifying on behalf of **Na Kia'i O Maui**, a boots-on-the-ground, community-based nonprofit serving our Maui families through the **Lahaina Resource and Recovery Center**. **We stand in strong support of HB2208 and its commitment to strengthening the Farmers to Families program and advancing food security across Hawai'i.**

In the aftermath of the devastating Maui wildfires, we have seen firsthand how critical local food systems are to the survival and resilience of our community. Food security is not just about access to meals—it is about dignity, stability, cultural connection, and long-term sustainability. When we invest in our local farmers, we invest in our people.

**Na Kia'i O Maui is proud to partner with the Maui Food Bank** in distributing fresh, locally grown produce and essential food supplies to fire survivors and vulnerable families across the island. Through this partnership, we have witnessed the powerful impact of connecting local agricultural producers directly to families in need. Farmers are able to sustain their operations, and families receive fresh, nutritious food grown right here at home.

As a community organizer from the Maui wildfires, we have served fire survivors and just recently opened our resource center to the community, and have found the walk-ins, such as the houseless, organizations that are serving women and children, and fire survivors. We welcome everyone to our gates. We need your support to help us help our people.

I believe together as a community we can support each other as we strive for a better tomorrow. Our Future food security begins with us, you, and me. May we make better choices for our families.

HB2208 strengthens this vital bridge between our farmers and our communities. It keeps resources circulating within Hawai'i, supports local agriculture, reduces dependency on imported goods, and builds a more resilient food system for future generations. This bill is not just an economic investment—it is a moral one.

For many of the families we serve—documented and undocumented, sheltered and unsheltered—food assistance is a lifeline. Supporting local farmers while feeding our people is a model of mālama ‘āina and mālama kekahi i kekahi in action.

Na Kia’i O Maui stands firmly in support of HB2208. We respectfully urge you to pass this bill to ensure that our farmers are supported, our communities are fed, and our island continues to move toward a more secure and sustainable future.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify and for your commitment to the people of Hawai‘i.

With respect and gratitude,

Nettie Aquino

Na Kia’i O Maui - Lahaina Resource and Recovery Center



# THE FOOD BASKET

## HAWAI'I ISLAND'S FOOD BANK

### TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 2208 HD1 – FARM TO FAMILIES

February 25, 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 HB 2208 – 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

HB 2208 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:** HB 2208 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.

HB 2208 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 HB 2208.

With deepest aloha,

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

EXECUTIVE  
DIRECTOR

KRISTIN FROST  
ALBRECHT

BOARD OF  
DIRECTORS

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BOARD CHAIR

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STEPHEN UEDA

WARREN LEE

SAMANTHA  
COLLINS

MAURICE  
MESSINA

CASEY HALPERN

JASON COHN



## House Committee on Finance

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

February 26th, 2026 at 2:00pm; Conference Room 308

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi 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 HD1. 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



PO Box 474  
Haleiwa HI, 96712  
808-228-8865  
info@lokoeafarms.com  
www.lokoeafarms.com

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February 5, 2026

Aloha! My name is Noe Neumann and I am the owner/operator at Lokoea Farms. We are a second generation family farm in Haleiwa and we grow citrus and tropical fruit for local consumption.

My family and I are writing to support the "Farm to Families" bill, a critical piece of legislation that will help secure a consistent market for local food producers, strengthening our community food systems and ensuring that fresh, locally grown produce reaches families facing food insecurity.

As a small family farm, we rely on the Hawaii Food Bank every year during our heaviest harvest season for our Haleiwa Gold Hawaiian Oranges. We sell oranges and other tropical fruit throughout the year through other channels such as Farm Link Hawaii, but during the fall/winter months we have a huge amount of oranges that our normal buyers can't handle. The Hawaii Food Bank has been stepping in every year since 2020 to purchase and distribute these delicious locally grown oranges to local families.

The partnership between our local farm and food organizations such as the Food Bank benefits families in our communities and our economy by:

1. **Strengthening Hawai'i's Food Supply Chain:** By investing in our small family farm, the Food Bank helps reduce Hawaii's 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, which will help the Food Bank continue providing a steady and fair market for our local oranges. Knowing that we have a market for our larger harvests allows us to plan for future growth knowing our fruit will feed our 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. You can't get better oranges than our fresh, juicy, sweet Haleiwa Gold Hawaiian Oranges!

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.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "G. Noe Neumann". The letters are cursive and fluid, with a distinct loop for the 'G' and a long, sweeping tail for the 'M'.

G. Noe Neumann

808-228-8865

[info@lokoeafarms.com](mailto:info@lokoeafarms.com)



## HIPHI Board

May Okihiro, MD, MS  
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For Children in Hawai'i

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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 25, 2026

To: Rep. Chris Todd, Chair  
Rep. Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair  
Members of the House Committee on Finance

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

Hrg: Thursday, February 26, 2026 at 2:00 PM in Conference Room 308

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</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.

<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



**Testimony to the House Committee on Finance  
Thursday, February 26, 2026; 2:00 p.m.  
State Capitol, Conf. Room 308  
Via Videoconference**

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

Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, 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, House Draft 1, 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**  
**Thursday, February 26, 2026; 2:00 p.m.**  
**Page 2**

The HPCA has supported the Food Hub Pilot Program since its creation in 2022 and had also supported the provision of additional 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](mailto:eabe@hawaiiipca.net).



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

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE  
Thursday, February 26, 2026 — 2:00 p.m.

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

Dear Chair Todd 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: 2/25/2026 9:19:10 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Katherine Metzger	Hanai Hives	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

I am writing in strong support of HB 2208 HD1, which establishes the Hawai'i Farm to Families Program to help address food insecurity across our state.

Food insecurity remains a serious challenge in Hawaii, with many households struggling to access consistent, nutritious meals. Strengthening our local food systems is one of the most practical and sustainable ways to address this issue. By enabling food banks and community organizations to purchase more locally grown food, this program creates a meaningful solution that benefits both families in need and our local farmers.

Local farmers often face significant barriers to reliable markets for their products. The Farm to Families Program would help stabilize demand for locally grown food, support agricultural businesses, and keep food dollars circulating within our local economy. At the same time, it would increase the availability of fresh, healthy food for families experiencing hardship.

This investment is also critical for disaster preparedness. During emergencies and economic downturns, food banks become essential lifelines for many residents, yet they rely heavily on private donations and grants. Providing dedicated funding for local food purchasing will strengthen emergency food distribution networks while improving long-term food security and resilience.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to support HB 2208 HD1.

Mahalo for your consideration.



To: The House Committee on Finance (FIN)  
From: Sherry Pollack, Co-Founder, 350Hawaii.org  
Date: Thursday, February 26, 2026, 2pm

**In strong support of HB2208 HD1**

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and FIN 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



Date: February 26, 2026

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

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, 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: 2/25/2026 12:38:36 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Sylvia Dolena	Pele Lani Farm LLC	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please vote yes on HB2208

**HB-2208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 8:11:58 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

2/25/26

Testimony in Support of Farm to Families

Aloha,

My name is Steve Ulene and I am Vice-Chair of the Board of 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:

- **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,

Steve Ulene

Makawao, Maui

Vice Chairman, Maui Food Bank Board of Trustees



Kaua`i Bible  
Church

## A Place to Belong

P.O. Box 570

Lawai, HI 96765

(808) 742-7514

info@kauaibiblechurch.com

Testimony in Support of Farm to Families

2/25/2026

Aloha,

My name is Mark Willman representing Kaua`i Bible Church, Lawai, Kaua`i.

### **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.
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.

Ending hunger in Hawaii is important to me because for 15+ years, our Church has conducted an outreach called Church on the Beach. This effort has fed many people over the years from those houseless in the parks to those working class families to kupuna. We have seen the difference in having available local food and produce that can help feed the people of the south side of Kaua`i making their lives better.



**Kaua`i Bible**  
Church

**A Place to Belong**

P.O. Box 570

Lawai, HI 96765

(808) 742-7514

[info@kauaibiblechurch.com](mailto:info@kauaibiblechurch.com)

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,

Your name

Mark Willman

Facilities Director

Kaua`i Bible Church

P.O. Box 570

2-4131 Kaumualii Hwy

Lawai, HI 96765

808-742-7514 (work)

808-212-8292 (mobile)

[MarkW@KauaiBibleChurch.com](mailto:MarkW@KauaiBibleChurch.com)



aloha@pacificbirthcollective.org  
pacificbirthcollective.org

‘Aloha ‘Āina Center  
810 Kokomo Road # 240 & #170  
Ha‘ikū, Hawai‘i 96708

#### PBC Board

February 24, 2026

Kiana Rowley  
*President*

Makalani Franco-Francis  
*Vice President*

Kristina Statler  
*Secretary*

Becky Lind  
*Treasurer*

Wyonette Waller

**Aloha,**

This letter is on behalf of **Pacific Birth Collective**, a Maui-based nonprofit dedicated to supporting families and fostering resilient communities. We are reaching out in **support of HB2208**, the “**Farm to Families**” bill. This critical legislation has the potential to transform Hawai‘i’s food security by strengthening partnerships between food distribution organizations and local farmers, ensuring fresh, locally grown produce reaches families facing food insecurity.

Through our **Farm to Mother** program, Pacific Birth Collective has seen firsthand the profound impact of connecting local farms to families in need. Collaborating with partners such as the Maui Food Bank, Common Ground Collective, and local farmers, we have provided nutritious, locally sourced foods to hundreds of families across our community. This bill would expand and strengthen such initiatives, amplifying benefits that extend far beyond food access.

#### PBC Executive Team

Morea Mendoza  
*Director of Leadership & Operations*

Sara Cousineau  
*Director of Finance*

Mariah Strong  
*Director of Programs & Communications*

Ki‘i Kaho‘ohanohano  
*Director of Culture and Outreach*

Sonya Niess, MPH  
*Director of Policy & Partnerships*

Partnerships between local farms and food distribution organizations strengthen our communities in several crucial ways:

- **Building resilient food systems:** Investing in local agriculture reduces Hawai‘i’s reliance on imported goods and fosters a sustainable food supply chain capable of withstanding global disruptions.
- **Empowering local farmers:** By providing a reliable and fair market for their produce, this legislation supports local farmers, enabling them to grow their businesses while feeding their neighbors.
- **Promoting community health:** Centering nutritious, locally sourced foods ensures families have access to essential nutrients, addressing hunger while improving long-term wellness.

For us, this work is deeply personal. Following the devastating 2023 Maui wildfires, the need for food security became clearer than ever. Families in crisis turned to organizations like ours not only for supplies and food, but for hope. Programs like Farm to Mother demonstrate that supporting local food systems is a life-changing solution for communities across Hawai‘i.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to a food-secure Hawai‘i. We are deeply grateful for your consideration of the “**Farm to Families**” bill and stand ready to collaborate to bring its vision to life.

Mahalo nui loa,  
Kiana Rowley, Board President

**HB-2208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 12:58:26 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

<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: 2/24/2026 5:03:53 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

<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. I'm requesting that you support HB2208 HD1.

**HB-2208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 5:14:31 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Karin S. Carlson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**02-24-2025**

**Testimony in Support of Farm to Families**

**Aloha,**

**Karin S. Carlson from Maui and a memembr of the Board of Directors of the Mui 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.

**Ending hunger is critical to the health of the people fo Hawaii. If you feed them, they can function, from children in school to those struggling to survive in one of the most costly places to live in the USA.**

**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,**

**Karin S. Carlson**

**Kihei, Maui**

**Secretary on the Board of Directors of the Maui Food Bank**

**HB-2208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 5:29:19 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

<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

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 Ban!
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 - Healthy Eating Active Living Community
Bev Brody	Kaua'i	Coalition of Kauai County
Violette Ishikawa	O'ahu	Get Fit Kauai - the Healthy Eating Active Living Coalition of Kauai County
Leilani Lori Bishop	O'ahu	Giving Hope Hawaii
	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
Rachel Inouye	O'ahu	Hawai'i Foodbank
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
Monica Durham	O'ahu	Hawaii DOE
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
Brian R.	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
Larry Smith	O'ahu	Kupuna Caucus of DPH
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	none	
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	
Mariailliana 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	
Melissa Moriguchi	O'ahu	Wahiawa Elementary School	
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	Lisa Shandoria Johnson	O'ahu
Lilson Maile Laau	O'ahu	Sandy Chen	O'ahu
Randy Junkman	O'ahu	Jane Arnold	O'ahu
Lynda Messier	O'ahu	Jessica Parayno	O'ahu
Hervie Messier	O'ahu	Terrie Wehrli	O'ahu
Jennifer Baxter	Kaua'i	Terri Nakasone	O'ahu
Valerie Chang	Kaua'i	Glenna Morrissey	O'ahu
Kathryn Ellman	O'ahu	Valerie Hashimoto	O'ahu
Faith Faustorilla	O'ahu	Lillian Rodolfich	O'ahu
Caroline Wilhite	O'ahu	Timothy K Blaisdell	O'ahu
Taylor Bair	O'ahu	Diana Kellum	O'ahu
Diane Bruce	O'ahu	Leslie Detor	O'ahu
Leilani Kim	O'ahu	Claire Narimasu	O'ahu

Nina Yopp	O'ahu	Angel Luong	O'ahu
Hans Van Tilburg	O'ahu	Kyra Shells	O'ahu
Tricia Coloma	O'ahu	Jaclyn Maher	O'ahu
Carlo Cayetano	O'ahu	Kathryn Kane	O'ahu
Allyn Kau	O'ahu	Berna Rabutan	O'ahu
Kiana Lee	O'ahu	Linda Estes	Kaua'i
Michelle Frederick	O'ahu	Norman Van Vactor	Kaua'i
Reton Shiu	O'ahu	Maureen Copeskey	O'ahu
Jonathan Wong	O'ahu	Tangela Manuelwatts	O'ahu
Christine Evans	O'ahu	Carolyn	O'ahu
Brittany Murray	O'ahu	Robert and Jean Johnson	O'ahu
Jennifer Hudson	O'ahu	Stacey Hendrickson	O'ahu
Ann Stagnaro	O'ahu	Annika Seavey	O'ahu
Tom Stagnaro	O'ahu	Kekua Kobashigawa	O'ahu
Athens p	O'ahu	Māhealani Kobashigawa	O'ahu
Katherine Park	O'ahu	Margaret Reager	O'ahu
Lori Yuh	O'ahu	Monzell Davis	O'ahu
Kristen Hahn	O'ahu	Christine Andrews	Maui
Sandra Pepee	O'ahu	Bridgetmarie Kaolulo	O'ahu
Lane Daigle	O'ahu	Chelsea McDonough	O'ahu
Marcos Cruz Ortiz	O'ahu	Noel Shaw	O'ahu
Claudia Moreno	O'ahu	Rik Masterson	Hawai'i
Roy Kimura	O'ahu	Jordan Smith	O'ahu
Ce'Lene Sakellis	O'ahu	Lauta'amutafea Shen	O'ahu
Aalia Meer	O'ahu	Jenna Hausvik	O'ahu
Natalie Hasegawa	O'ahu	Kailey Wilt	O'ahu
Valline Schmidt	O'ahu	Kimberly Golis-Robello	O'ahu
John Kojima	O'ahu	Cristal Mortensen	O'ahu
LaTrisha Granston	O'ahu	Rachel Reyes-Huynh	O'ahu
Meredith Torres	O'ahu	Joyce Umali Perreira	O'ahu
Franz Schnell	O'ahu	Lori Lynn Aoki	O'ahu
Adriann Gin	O'ahu	Caroline Azelski	Hawai'i
Christine Mitchell	O'ahu	Brandi Saragosa	Maui
Leticia Calles	O'ahu	Keith Yap	Kaua'i
Holly Elder	O'ahu	Mitchell Matsumori-Kelly	O'ahu
Lei-Anne Jones	O'ahu	Emma Waters	Hawai'i
Michael Jones	O'ahu	Jared Kawatani	O'ahu
Nanami Jones	O'ahu	Julia Jay	Statewide
Phyllis Krajewski	O'ahu	Mario Tabaquin	O'ahu
Eduardo	O'ahu	Elna Nagasako	O'ahu
Fiaalii Filisi	O'ahu	Tayla-Angel Jimenez	O'ahu
Rinka Shimizu	O'ahu	Molly Mamaril	O'ahu
Debra Kaawalauole	O'ahu	Lauren Nelson	Maui
Connie Lu	O'ahu	Anne Chamness	O'ahu
Jane George	O'ahu	Elise krause	O'ahu
Jodie Paulos	O'ahu	Rebecca Hartman	O'ahu
Fran Gendrano	O'ahu	Lindsay Domantay	O'ahu
Delmar J Bayang	O'ahu	Leigh Ann Lopez	O'ahu
Daniel Smith	O'ahu	Elizabeth Grossman	O'ahu
Bethany Ortiz-D'Amico	O'ahu	Genevieve Mumma	O'ahu
Travis Hipolito	O'ahu	Cyd Hoffeld	Hawai'i

Adele Tasaka	O'ahu	Annette Tashiro	O'ahu
Lori Watkins	O'ahu	An Vo	O'ahu
Jayne Takaki	Statewide	Christen Oliveira	O'ahu
David Jones	O'ahu	Ariana Hansen	O'ahu
Veronica Sablan	O'ahu	Debbie Millikan	O'ahu
Mar Scott	O'ahu	Charlene Hosenfeld	O'ahu
Cheryl Hunt	O'ahu	Gayle Goodman	O'ahu
Liz Okun	O'ahu	Sharon Stehlik	O'ahu
Carol Kinoshita Lau	O'ahu	Curstyn Yoshimoto	O'ahu
Mary Ellen Rubio	O'ahu	U'ilani Kapuaakuni	O'ahu
Alexis Davidson	O'ahu	Kat Saneewong	O'ahu
Laurie Nakama	O'ahu	Emi Kaneshiro	O'ahu
Sandra Schulman	O'ahu	Franz Schnell	O'ahu
Kristi Hammond	O'ahu	Mae Althea Gallardo	O'ahu
Raisa Kakigi	O'ahu	Gustavo de a Pena	O'ahu
Cindy Verdespina	O'ahu	Sheri Washburn	O'ahu
Dale Jensen	O'ahu	Deborah Miles	O'ahu
michelle rainville	O'ahu	Lisa Wong	O'ahu
Charlene Mancusi	O'ahu	Autasia Sakaria	O'ahu
Dan Fong	O'ahu	Shona Petersen	O'ahu
Carol Nakamura	O'ahu	Darlene Gaco	O'ahu
Lynda Antonio	Kaua'i	Jacqueline Mapuana	O'ahu
Polina Dineva	O'ahu	Kamehamehal	O'ahu
Kaeo Kim	O'ahu	Scott Sonoda	O'ahu
Katina Marx	O'ahu	Ramon De La Cruz	Statewide
ingrid jansson	O'ahu	Paula T. Ortiz	O'ahu
Norma Murayama	O'ahu	Jane E Arnold	O'ahu
Ginger Matusiak	O'ahu	Me Manu-Lee	O'ahu
Roger Breisch	O'ahu	Vanessa Mamhot	O'ahu
Lisa Brenneman	Statewide	Charlene Duplantier	O'ahu
Carlyne Averell	Statewide	Alan Terasako	O'ahu
Charlotte Baker	O'ahu	Anna Gregorio	O'ahu
Michael Baker	O'ahu	Jimmy Fung	O'ahu
Malia Ellis	O'ahu	Debra Auld	O'ahu
Charlie King	Kaua'i	Ashlyn Pua Borges	O'ahu
John Todt	O'ahu	Jane Arnold	O'ahu
Nina Lum	O'ahu	Noel Shaw	O'ahu
Gary Rickard	O'ahu	Joyce Aquino	O'ahu
Kim Campbell	O'ahu	Christine Andrews	Maui
Russell	O'ahu	gayle goodman	O'ahu
Angeline Santos	O'ahu	Gustavo de la Pena	O'ahu
Marion Berklina	O'ahu	Ward Whipple	Maui
Lorraine Asano	O'ahu	Anton Avanozian	Maui
Marie Sode	O'ahu	tia pearson	O'ahu
Diane Decker	Kaua'i	Annie Green	O'ahu
Laetitia Thibault-Santoro	Statewide	Pam Clifford	O'ahu
Elaine Allwine-Caspers	O'ahu	Ana Kia	O'ahu
Lauren Long	O'ahu	Vicky Crowder	O'ahu
Annie Green	O'ahu	Lee Winter	O'ahu
Lisa Kelliher	O'ahu	Grace Sherley	O'ahu
		Kyle Phillips Ramsvig	O'ahu

Nina Jo-Ring  
carole richelieu  
Michelle Espinoza

O'ahu  
O'ahu  
O'ahu

Taylor Ka'ili McKenzie  
Cailey G

O'ahu  
O'ahu

**HB-2208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 6:16:56 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha!

My name is Jody Smith. I am a retiree with 18 years of experience with the sustainable agriculture program at UH Manoa College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources. I regularly donate to and volunteer with the Hawai'i Food Bank. I help out with the Food 4 Keiki Program, the CSFP Kupuna Food Box Program, and the food distribution program operated by Kings Cathedral in Aina Haina.

As a HFB volunteer, I unpack boxes and boxes of beautiful fruits and produce grown by our local farmers. I help fill and hand out bags of vegetables. I enjoy watching our local clients growing excited by the variety and selection of popular vegetables (like bok choy, daikon, bitter melon) and local tropical fruits (papaya, pineapple) — the flavors of our islands. The partnership between the Hawaii Food Bank and the Hawaii Farm Bureau has allowed us to distribute this delicious and nourishing fresh produce.

Continuation and expansion of this program via the "Farm to Families" bill will bring multiple benefits to our state.

Please provide full support for the 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.

As a former agricultural professional in Hawaii, I understand the importance of growing, purchasing and distributing locally grown foods.

Investing in local agriculture reduces the state's dependence on imported food (now estimated at 85% — extraordinarily high).

With a reliable market for their produce, Hawaii's farmers are better able to plan for and supply delicious and nutritious food.

Fresh, local produce provides essential nutrients to individuals and families who may otherwise lack access to healthy food options, fighting hunger and promoting long-term health and wellness in our communities.

Please support the "Farm to Families" bill.

Mahalo nui loa

Jody Smith

Honolulu 96825

**HB-2208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 3:58:45 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

<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.

February 24, 2026

To: Chair Chris Todd, Vice Chair Jenna Takenouchi, and the House Committee on Finance

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 provides funding for 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 also experience higher rates of nutritional deficiencies, and physical and mental health disparities. No family across the pae 'āina should need to experience this level of distress. **The extent to which people need food in Hawai'i is far greater than what many of us could ever realize.**

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 remains at alarming levels, and yet, as the demand grows, support is fading.** Funding for our food banks has been slashed, resulting 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 communities and keiki.

As a farmer, I understand how important the food bank's purchasing power is for local producers. This bill would support our food banks' ability to purchase in larger quantities from farms, which many other market outlets and customers aren't capable of doing. **It would provide a beneficial customer for our farms, while also helping to put more locally grown food on peoples' plates, and contributing 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: 2/24/2026 8:02:37 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

STRONG SUPPORT!!!

**HB-2208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 10:28:49 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

<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 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.

**HB-2208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 1:06:48 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Molly Mamaril	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is Molly Mamaril and I'm a Honolulu resident and a regular volunteer at foodbanks and food pantries. **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.

Thank you,

Molly Mamaril

Kaimukī, O'ahu



**HB-2208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 11:09:18 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

<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.

February 2, 2026  
Testimony in Support of Farm to Families

Aloha,

My name is Lindsay Domantay from Kapolei, Hawaii.

**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.
- 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.

I am fortunate to have been born and raised in Hawai'i, with the notion that community is our kuleana, instilled in me. No one should go hungry. Basic needs— healthy food, clean water, and shelter are essential for survival. This bill will help support local farmers and help build a sustainable food system here in the islands, while ensuring that nutritious food will be made accessible to our neighbors in need.

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,

Lindsay Domantay  
Kapolei, Hawai'i

**HB-2208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 9:14:50 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jodi Rodar	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.

Sincerely,

Jodi Rodar

223 North Valley Road

Pelham, MA 01002

**HB-2208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 9:16:10 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chairperson and Committee Members,

My name is Christopher Egbo, and I am a concerned citizen of Honolulu writing in strong support of HB 2208 HD1. This bill represents a vital step toward addressing two of Hawai‘i’s most pressing challenges: food insecurity and the need to strengthen our local agricultural economy.

The statistics are sobering. One in three households in Hawai‘i experiences food insecurity, and nearly half of ALICE households, those who are employed but struggle to meet basic needs, lack consistent access to nutritious food. At the same time, many of our local farmers face significant barriers to accessing reliable markets. HB 2208 HD1 offers a solution that bridges both gaps: by enabling food banks to purchase more locally grown food, we can nourish our communities while supporting Hawai‘i’s farmers.

Investing in this program is a win-win. It helps grow our local food economy, reduces our reliance on costly imports, and ensures that families in need have access to fresh, healthy food. As the cost of imports continues to rise, strengthening our local food system is not just a matter of economic sense, it’s a matter of long-term resilience and food security.

We also know that in times of disaster—whether a hurricane, volcanic eruption, or global pandemic, food banks are on the front lines, yet they are expected to respond with little to no government support. Currently, they rely almost exclusively on private donations and grants, even though local governments depend on them during crises. The Farm to Families program would change that by providing dedicated funding to purchase food from local farmers, improving emergency food access for families and creating a stable, local market for farmers when they need it most.

This is a smart, compassionate, and forward-looking investment in our communities. I urge you to support HB 2208 HD1.

Mahalo for your time and consideration,

Christopher Egbo  
Concerned Citizen of Honolulu



**HB-2208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 9:16:48 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
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: 2/25/2026 9:19:29 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Susan Douglas	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!

Susan Douglas, Kihei

**HB-2208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 3:16:54 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

I support Farm to Families. People accessing the foodbank deserve not just canned good and commodities but fresh, locally grown, nutritious food. And, this is a win-win for the economy, because it circulates money locally to support local farmers.

**HB-2208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 9:21:14 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Georgia L Hoopes	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Committee Members!

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!

Georgia Hoopes, Kalaheo

**HB-2208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 9:24:42 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Local food production is the core of a sustainable food system and consistent support for our farmers is essential to provide the liveable wage and stability that local families need to choose to pursue farming.

I celebrate and support this bills effort to contribute and invest in our farmers.

**HB-2208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 9:28:44 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Hello Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Nanea Lo, and I respectfully submit this testimony in strong support of **HB 2208 HD1, relating to the Farm to Families Program.**

Food insecurity in Hawai‘i has reached alarming levels. One in three households in our state experiences food insecurity, and nearly half of ALICE households struggle to maintain consistent access to food. These are not abstract numbers — they represent our kūpuna, working families, and keiki who are doing their best in an increasingly unaffordable state.

HB 2208 HD1 offers a practical, community-based solution. By establishing the Hawai‘i Farm to Families Program, this bill strengthens our local food system while addressing hunger directly. Increasing the ability of food banks to purchase locally grown food is a win-win. It supports local farmers — many of whom face ongoing challenges accessing stable markets — while ensuring that families receive fresh, nutritious, locally sourced food.

As import costs continue to rise and supply chains remain vulnerable, investing in our local agricultural economy is not just beneficial — it is necessary for long-term food security. The COVID-19 pandemic and recent disasters have shown us how fragile our food systems can be. Food banks are essential partners in times of crisis, yet they rely heavily on private donations and grants despite being critical components of our emergency response infrastructure.

The Farm to Families Program would provide consistent funding for food banks to purchase directly from local farmers, strengthening both our emergency preparedness and our agricultural economy. This is a smart investment in resilience, sustainability, and community well-being.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to support HB 2208 HD1.

me ke aloha ‘āina,

Nanea Lo, 96826

Carbon Cashback Hawai‘i Member

Hawai‘i Workers Center Board Member

Honolulu Tenants Union Member

Hawai'i Tax Fairness Coalition

Clean Elections Hawai'i Member

**HB-2208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 9:34:32 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Val Hertzog	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!

Val Hertzog, Kapa‘a

**HB-2208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 10:23:25 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
B.A. McClintock	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!

**HB-2208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 10:24:43 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Please support this bill, I can not imagine any Hawaii resident being opposed to this (maybe billionaires?), Mahalo.

Lori Kizer, Kapaa

**HB-2208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 10:27:46 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

<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. Mahalo!

**HB-2208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 1:54:11 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

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 the Hawai‘i Foodbank Kaua‘i on our property because we know that is when many families are stretched to their limit. I am writing in strong support of HB2208 HD1. Living in rural Kaua‘i already comes with structural challenges — geographic isolation, limited infrastructure, and repeated natural disasters that can cut us off from the rest of the island. When heavy rains flood Kūhiō Highway or landslides close access routes, deliveries stop. Our shelves thin out quickly. In those moments, families cannot simply “drive to the next store.” There isn’t one. Layered on top of that is Hawai‘i’s extreme cost of living. Families here face some of the highest food, housing, fuel, and utility costs in the nation. For many working households, even those with full-time employment, one unexpected expense — a car repair, medical bill, or week of reduced hours — can mean the grocery budget collapses. By the last week of the month, the strain is visible. That is why the timing of the mobile pantry matters so much.

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, where prices are higher and options are fewer, those realities are intensified.

HB2208 HD1 strengthens our resilience in two critical ways. First, it supports local farmers by creating a dependable institutional market — something many small producers lack. Second, it ensures that food banks can provide fresh, locally grown food to families who are struggling under the weight of Hawai‘i’s high cost structure.

As import costs continue to rise and climate events become more frequent, relying heavily on distant supply chains increases both price volatility and risk. Investing in local food production stabilizes supply, keeps dollars circulating in our islands, and builds long-term food security.

Food banks are essential emergency infrastructure, yet they rely largely on private donations and grants — even though government agencies depend on them during disasters and economic downturns. Providing funding to purchase from local farmers strengthens both emergency preparedness and economic stability.

HB2208 HD1 is not just about food access — it is about addressing the high cost of living, strengthening local agriculture, and ensuring rural communities like mine are not left behind when the next crisis comes.

Mahalo for your strong support.

**HB-2208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 10:28:49 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Tristyn Wiehl	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!

Tristyn, Honolulu

**HB-2208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 11:00:39 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

**SUPPORT**

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

HEARING:  
Wednesday, February 25, 2026 at 2:00 pm  
Conference Room 308 and Via Videoconference  
State Capitol

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

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, my Rep. Miyake for Wailuku, Rep. Yamashita of Maui, 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

**SAMPLE TESTIMONY  
FARM TO FAMILIES**

**February 25, 2026**

Testimony in Support of Farm to Families

Aloha,

My name is Elma Paaleb, Food Distribution Coordinator, Jesus Reigns Hawaii, a Hawaii Foodbank Partner Agency.

**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.
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 help Hawaii Foodbank distribute food including produce to over 100 senior adults in the Waipahu, Ewa Beach, Pearl City, Kapolei 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,

Elma Paaleb  
Food Distribution Coordinator  
Jesus Reigns Hawaii

Pilina Health Resources Inc.  
Waipahu, Hawaii

**HB-2208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 11:30:53 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

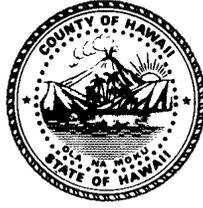
Comments:

Thank you for allowing testimony on HB 2208. Quality nutrition is vital to the health of the people of Hawai‘i. Ensuring sustainable access to and distribution of healthy, local food with our most in need is vital. I support funding the Hawaii Farm to Families Program under the Department of Human Services to alleviate food shortages and support a sustainable future.

Given that the bill is directed to the health of our keiki, keeping the focus on food other than coffee may be reasonable.

Thank you for allowing testimony on this vital bill to assure the basic health needs of the people of Hawaii.

Patty Tran, DO



## HAWAI'I COUNTY COUNCIL - DISTRICT 2

25 Aupuni Street • Hilo, Hawai'i 96720

DATE: February 3, 2026  
TO: House Committee on Finance  
FROM: Jennifer Kagiwada, Council Member  
Council District 2  
SUBJECT: HB2208

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

I am writing in strong support of HB 2208. The statistics around food insecurity in Hawai'i are staggering. One in three households in Hawai'i report experiencing food insecurity. In Hawai'i County we have 43% or 90,000 individuals facing regular food insecurity. 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 program will help grow our local economy while providing our communities with nutritious food. As the cost of imports continues to increase, investing in our local food infrastructure will help bolster our local production and food security in the long term.

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 a local market for farmers during times of economic crisis.

Mahalo,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jenn Kagiwada".

Jenn Kagiwada

**HB-2208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 11:49:11 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

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

My name is Jackie Keefe, and I am **in strong support of HB2208 HD1**, which establishes the Hawai'i Farm to Families Program to alleviate food shortages in the State.

I have worked as an advocate for Lahaina fire survivors in various capacities for the past 30 months, and food insecurity has consistently been one of the primary challenges they've faced. A community facing significant trauma has no path to healing without food and housing security, and this bill takes steps to address one of those challenges.

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!

Jackie Keefe, Lahaina

**HB-2208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 11:54:47 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Please support HB 2208 HD1. Food insecurity in Hawai‘i is a crisis hiding in plain sight. One in three households struggles to put food on the table, and nearly half of ALICE families face empty cupboards far too often. Empowering food banks to buy from local farmers is a win for everyone: it nourishes our communities and strengthens our farmers. Local growers often struggle to find buyers for their harvests, but this bill opens new doors. By investing in our local food system, we can grow a resilient agricultural economy and ensure our neighbors have access to fresh, healthy food. As import costs climb, supporting local production is not just smart—it is essential for Hawai‘i’s future.

When disaster strikes, Hawai‘i’s families turn to food banks for help. Yet these lifelines depend almost entirely on private donations and grants, even as local governments count on them in emergencies. The Farm to Families program would change that by providing crucial funding to buy from local farmers, ensuring families have food when they need it most, and giving farmers a reliable market during tough times.

Mahalo for your consideration!

**HB-2208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 1:36:40 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha and Mahalo for allowing this testimony.

I am writing to support HB2208 HD1 relating to Food Security in Hawaii. Supporting consistent access to food, particularly locally grown items, for our Hawaii residents is a crucial decision for our legislators. Living on an island compounds the need for passing this request. The desire to "support local" is an ongoing mantra for those living in Hawaii. Our residents, particularly children, those with limited incomes, those marginalized by society and those struggling just to have housing security, can all benefit from this relief. Children with limited access to food can impact their developmental development, possibly impacting a greater need later in life. Our FoodBanks provide a valuable resource by distributing excess food items, generously donated by our local farmers. This funding can impact our residents at all levels and can benefit our community immediately and in the long run.

Thank you for proposing and considering legislation with direct, beneficial impacts to those most needing the support!

Jill

**HB-2208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 12:48:33 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

I support HB2208

**HB-2208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 1:08:30 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jared Kawatani	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

2/25/2026

Testimony in Support of Farm to Families

Aloha,

My name and Jared Kawatani and live in Kaneohe on the island of Oahu.

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.
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.

This is important to me as someone who was born and raised here and sees first hand the challenges that our neighbors face everyday just to make ends meet. This is a win-win program and I hope this program continues to be funded.

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,

Jared Kawatani

Kaneohe, Hawaii

**HB-2208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 1:16:38 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

<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: 2/25/2026 1:43:05 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lauren Nelson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

February 25, 2026

Testimony in Support of Farm to Families

Aloha,

I am a board member of the Maui Food Bank, 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.

Our neighbors want to have access to healthy, culturally-relevant food options to feed their families. Local food is often the most requested item at Maui Food Bank's food distribution sites across Maui, Molokai, and Lāna'i. HB2208 supports our local farmers, and it supports the health of our community.

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,

Lauren Nelson

Kula, Maui

**HB-2208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 1:50:14 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Gustavo De la Pena	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

HB-2208

Submitted on: 02/25/2026 13:50:53 PM

Submitted By

Gustavo de la Pena Valencia Individual Support Written Testimony Only

**Testimony in support** of increased funding for the Farm to Families program under the Department of Human Services.

Aloha. My name is Gustavo de la Pena. As a person who has been living in Hawai'i for more than 20 years, and during that time being volunteering for initiatives related with farm work, environmental protection, and food allocation and delivery, I have witnessed the deep dislocation between the different components of the farm to consumer chain in our island.

We have farmers working hard for maintaining their family production units and for finding opportunities and mechanisms for introducing their products in the market. We also have an incremental crisis in the capacity for access to enough and nutritious food by an important part of the population. There is a not satisfactory offer of food for our kids in terms of quality in their schools, as well as significative waste of produce and, in general, a big dependency of the population of the state on imported food from continental USA and beyond.

Bill 2208 doesn't pretend or can resolve all the incoherencies of the farm-food chain like the ones mentioned above, but is one step in supporting the work of organizations involved in the relevant and urgent conversation on both food security and community resilience across the state. Besides, by increasing investment in locally grown food for distribution to households facing hardship, Farm to Families could keep improving 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.

Mahalo

Gustavo de la Pena

**HB-2208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 1:56:34 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
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: 2/25/2026 2:28:11 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Sheila Medeiros	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

Testimony in Support of H.B. 2208 HD1

Relating to Food Security (Hawaii Farm to Families Program)

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Sheila Medeiros, and I am a resident of Kapolei, Hawaii. I represent a community partner agency, and I strongly support H.B. 2208 HD1 to establish and fund the Hawaii Farm to Families Program.

As a partner agency that collaborates on monthly food bank drives in Kapolei, I witness firsthand the persistent and growing need for food assistance in our west side communities on Oahu. Our area continues to face significant challenges with food insecurity, driven by high living costs, limited access to affordable fresh food, and economic pressures that disproportionately affect working families, keiki, and vulnerable households.

Each month, through our coordinated efforts, we provide essential food support to approximately 600-700 individuals and families. This includes distributing groceries, fresh produce when available, and other necessities to those who might otherwise go without. Despite these efforts, demand remains high, and many families still struggle to put nutritious meals on the table—often having to skip fresh fruits and vegetables due to cost. The statistics in the bill's preamble resonate deeply here: one in three Hawaii households faces food insecurity, with children and certain ethnic communities hit hardest.

The Hawaii Farm to Families Program would be transformative for communities like ours. By providing grants to food banks to purchase, store, and transport fresh, Hawaii-grown or -produced food, the program would:

Ensure a more consistent supply of nutritious, locally sourced items—such as Okinawan sweet potato, bok choy, long beans, breadfruit, and kalo—that are culturally relevant and healthier for our families.

Reduce reliance on expensive imported foods while supporting Hawaii's farmers and keeping economic benefits circulating locally.

Strengthen the partnerships between food banks, community agencies like ours, and local agricultural producers, building a more resilient food system for the long term.

This initiative aligns perfectly with the values of mālama ‘āina and addresses both immediate hunger relief and sustainable economic development. Without continued and expanded support like this, it will be increasingly difficult to meet the needs we see every month in Kapolei and across the west side.

I urge the Committee to pass H.B. 2208 HD1 and to provide robust funding for the Hawaii Farm to Families Program. This investment will directly help feed our keiki and families, support local agriculture, and build a healthier, more self-reliant Hawaii.

Mahalo nui loa for the opportunity to testify and for your commitment to addressing food security in our state.

Sincerely,

Sheila Medeiros

Kapolei, Hawaii

Partner Agency Supporting Food Bank Drives in Kapolei



**HB-2208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 3:22:48 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

I support this bill, it will lead to more food security. Please support.

## **Testimony in Support of HB 2208 HD1**

### Hawai'i Farm to Families Program

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Brit Ashe. I am writing in strong support of HB 2208 HD1, establishing the Hawai'i Farm to Families Program.

As someone who works closely with families and understands firsthand how food insecurity impacts children, I know that consistent access to nutritious food is not a luxury, it's foundational. When households struggle to access food, everything else destabilizes: health, school readiness, emotional regulation, and long-term well-being.

HB 2208 HD1 offers a practical and forward-thinking solution. By enabling food banks to purchase locally grown food, this bill strengthens two essential systems at once: family food access and local agriculture.

Hawai'i faces unique vulnerabilities due to geographic isolation and dependence on imported goods. Strengthening local food systems is not simply an economic investment; it is a resilience strategy. Supporting local farmers while ensuring families receive fresh, nutritious food creates stability at both the household and community level.

Food banks play a critical role in disaster response and ongoing community support, yet they often operate without stable, public funding. Investing in this program acknowledges the essential public function they serve and provides a sustainable mechanism to improve long-term food security.

This bill is both compassionate and pragmatic. It supports families, strengthens local agriculture, and builds a more resilient food system for Hawai'i's future.

I respectfully urge you to support HB 2208 HD1.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Respectfully

Brit M Ashe

Independent Childcare Professional

[Justbritthanks.com](http://Justbritthanks.com)

**HB-2208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 4:03:43 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dita Škalic	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!

**HB-2208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 6:45:37 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

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: 2/25/2026 7:54:02 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Danielle Jones	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!

Danielle Jones, Waimea

**HB-2208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 8:09:45 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jennifer Lum	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in **strong support of HB2208**. Hawai'i is incredibly dependent on outside food sources. We need to do everything possible to support our farmers to feed all the people of Hawai'i. We do not want to be caught off guard, not having enough food in our islands. The only way to do that is to encourage and support our farmers.

Food should be a human right, and stepping up to ensure Hawai'i can provide is the right thing to do.

Mahalo,

Jen Lum, 'Ewa Beach

**HB-2208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 8:47:34 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Please pass this bill to help feed Hawaii and promote local agriculture. Shockingly, one in three households in Hawaii report experiencing food insecurity. 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.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Dr. Lorna Holmes, Mo'ili'ili 96826

**HB-2208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 10:38:05 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Im in support of HB2208

Supporting the direct link between farm and families builds successful bonds in the community and leads to healthy outcomes for the people of Hawaii. People and government on the other hand supporting farmers creates a local economy that builds wealth.

**HB-2208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/26/2026 2:46:38 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Warren K Orikasa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I have been involved with food distribution at my church, Iao United Church of Christ, for the past four years. We serve 150-180 people per week. The canned, boxed, and packaged foods are foundational items, but the fresh produce and fruits that are always in demand and requested. Locally farmed products are vital. I have witnessed many small farmers donate to the Maui Food Bank. Please support this bill. Mahalo!

**HB-2208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/26/2026 6:59:32 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha Respected Members of the State Legislature. Mahalo nui loa for your time. My name is Sara Barr, I am farmer and owner of Hale Sunshine Rae Farm on Maui and I grow for the Maui Food Bank. I am in FULL SUPPORT OF HB 2208. I have personally grown and donated over eleven tons of fresh produce for the MFB and while I am able to donate produce, this is an impossibility for the majority of farmers here in Hawai'i. In effort to assist further, I ran a pilot food aggregation program here at my farm for five months. What I learned was that while Maui's farmers were more than willing to participate and sell their produce for close to market rates, they were unwilling to lose money on their investments and hard work for the meager amount of money the MFB was actually able to pay. The passage of this bill will assist the fight for food sovereignty for Hawai'i by easing the financial burden and enabling the distribution system that I promise you is ready to go. The passage of this bill will bring all of us up - we will all win, when the most vulnerable of us are given a chance to succeed and that starts with being able to feed yourself, to feed your ohana the freshest food available. This bill will also energize the agricultural industry, which will only make our economy stronger on the whole. Together, I know we can turn food insecurity into food sovereignty. Please support the passage of this bill. Mahalo nui loa.

**HB-2208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/26/2026 8:35:50 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha and to whom it may concern,

Thank you for taking the time to accept testimony of this matter. As a full time Maui resident our local food security is ALWAYS a top priority for me. I am writing in support of HB2208. Many of Hawaii's residents struggle with food security and creating and supporting a system that brings Hawaii raised foods into our food banks is the healthiest most sustainable option for feeding our communities. For too long we have relied on imported food for local consumption. This program will support farmers and residents alike while strengthening our food systems for the future. Please consider passing this bill and providing fresh local healthy foods to our islands. This is especially important for those relying on food banks and food assistance as so many items are processed and packaged. This will be a healthier option for all including the environment which pays the price of every shipping container that crosses the ocean to reach Hawaii's shores. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Melody Torres

**HB-2208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/26/2026 8:38:27 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Julia Marrack	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!

Julia Marrack, 96743

To: Hawaii State House Committee on Finance

Hearing Date/Time: Tuesday February 26, 2026, 2:00pm

Place: Hawaii State Capitol, CR 308 & Videoconference

Re: Judith Ann Armstrong supports HB2208 Relating to Funding for Farm to Families program under DHS

Dear Chair Rep Chris Todd, Vice Chair Rep Jenna Takenouchi and members of the Committee on Finance  
I, Judith Ann Armstrong, support HB2208 to appropriate funds for Farm to Families program

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.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Judith Ann Armstrong

**HB-2208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/26/2026 9:37:02 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha from Maui. I am in support of this bill to fund a way for local farmers to utilize thier hard grown food to noirish the lahui. I have received food boxes from the Maui Foodbank many times. The cans can keep the belly full but real nourishment comes from live food and produce. Our farmers can support their community and their families with this program. We can avoid wasted resources such as rotten food and put it in the hands of those who need it. Mahalo for your time.

**HB-2208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/26/2026 9:52:24 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Gary R Ueunten	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Gary Ueunten, a small farmer on Kauai. We are a small third generation farm on Kauai serving the community. I am in support of HB 2208 and the intent to support food banks serving the local community. We have transitioned from farmers markets to direct sales, including our local food banks and food hubs to increase harvesting/marketing efficiency.and to support food safety. Support of food banks is a "win-win" for the farmers and people served by our food banks.

**HB-2208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/26/2026 9:59:00 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

<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: 2/26/2026 10:27:09 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Noelle Lindenmann	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

I am writing in **support of 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 this opportunity to provide testimony,

Noelle Lindenmann, Kailua-Kona

**HB-2208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/26/2026 11:39:16 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Dear Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee:

I am writing in strong support of HB2208 HD1, which establishes the Hawai'i Farm to Families Program under the Department of Human Services to support food banks in purchasing, storing, and transporting fresh Hawai'i-grown or Hawai'i-produced food for communities experiencing food insecurity.

This measure is especially important as many households across Hawai'i, including families still recovering from the Lahaina wildfire, continue to face high food costs, disrupted routines, and ongoing financial strain. Supporting food banks while also strengthening local farmers and food producers is a practical, community-centered approach that improves access to nutritious food and builds long-term resilience.

Please pass HB2208 HD1 and provide meaningful funding so the program can have real impact statewide, including on Maui.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Nikima Glatt, DrPH(c), MPH, APRN-RX, FPMHNP-BC

**HB-2208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/26/2026 12:24:32 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
ANDREW ISODA	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!

Andrew Isoda  
Lahaina, Mau‘i

# MA KA HANA KA 'IKE

*“In Working, One Learns”*

February 26, 2026

**Subject:** TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF [HB2208](#) — RELATING TO THE FARM TO FAMILIES PROGRAM

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

On behalf of [Ma Ka Hana Ka 'Ike](#), I am writing to express our strong support for [HB2208](#), which provides vital funding for the [Farm to Families](#) program.

Currently, 1 in 3 households in Hawai‘i—including 34% of our children—face food insecurity. In our rural community of Hāna, the challenges of food access and high costs are even more pronounced. This bill is a critical step toward building a more resilient and equitable food system for our islands.

At [Ma Ka Hana Ka 'Ike](#), we see the direct impact of local agriculture on community health through our [Mahele Farm](#) program. Each month, our farm produces approximately 2,000 pounds of fresh, organic produce that is distributed 100% to our local community. We also engage youth through [Kahu 'Ai Pono](#), a culinary program that teaches them to process local foods and to appreciate the land that sustains us.

Supporting [HB2208](#) will benefit our community in three key ways:

- **Strengthening the Food Supply Chain:** Investing in local agriculture reduces our dependence on imports and builds resilience against disasters or economic crises.
- **Supporting Local Farmers:** This bill creates a steady, fair market for local produce, allowing farmers to plan for growth while feeding their neighbors.
- **Enhancing Nutritional Access:** Fresh produce provides essential nutrients to families who might otherwise lack healthy options, promoting long-term community wellness.

By funding the [Farm to Families](#) program, you are not just fighting hunger; you are investing in the health of our keiki, the stability of our farmers, and the future of our 'āina.

We respectfully urge the Committee to pass [HB2208](#). Mahalo for your time and for your commitment to food security in Hawai‘i.

Sincerely,

Lipoa Kahaleuahi

Executive Director

**HB-2208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/26/2026 1:05:35 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jennifer Kau'i Young	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!

Kau'i Young, Ho'okena, HI

**HB-2208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/26/2026 1:19:45 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha House Members,

Our local families need all the help available. Especially fresh nutritious local food.

Please support HB2208 HD1

Regards ,

Pamela Burrell, Kalihiwai, Kaua'i

**HB-2208-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/26/2026 2:11:32 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
emily gambino	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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Mahalo for your consideration!

Emily Gambino

Makawao, HI