



CATHOLIC CHARITIES HAWAI'I

SUPPORT HB 2208 HD1: RELATING TO FOOD SECURITY

TO: Senate Committee on Health and Human Services
FROM: Betty Lou Larson, Legislative Liaison, Catholic Charities Hawai'i
Hearing: Wednesday, March 25, 2026; 1:40 PM; CR 225 & Videoconference

Aloha Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair McKelvey, and Members, Committee on Health and Human Services:

My name is Betty Lou Larson from Catholic Charities Hawai'i. Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony. We are in **strong support of HB 2208 HD1**, which establishes and funds grants for the Farm to Families Program to alleviate food shortages in the State.

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 HD1 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. This measure aligns with these goals and reflects a thoughtful investment in both people and local agriculture.

Catholic Charities Hawai'i respectfully urges the Committee to pass this important bill. If you have any questions, please contact our Legislative Liaison, Betty Lou Larson, at (808) 527-4813.

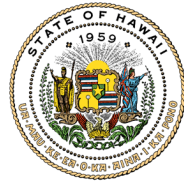


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JOSH GREEN, M.D.
Governor

SYLVIA LUKE
Lt. Governor



SHARON HURD
Chairperson
Board of Agriculture & Biosecurity

DEAN M. MATSUKAWA
Deputy to the Chairperson

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

**TESTIMONY OF SHARON HURD
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE AND BIOSECURITY
BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**

**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 25, 2026
1:40 PM
CONFERENCE ROOM 225 & VIDEOCONFERENCE**

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

Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair McKelvey and Members of the Committee:

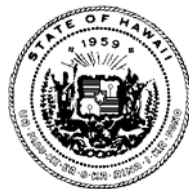
Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill No. 2208, HD1 that establishes and appropriates funds in the form of grants for the Hawaii Farm to Families Program under the Department of Human Services to alleviate food shortages in the State. Requires reports to the Legislature before the Regular Sessions of 2027 and 2028.

The Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity (Department) supports this measure that acknowledges the great need of a majority of Hawaii families to secure consistent food access and provides nourishment to these families through a grant program that engages food banks, already familiar with the intake, distribution and administration of the processes of providing food to families.

This measure provides relief to the stresses to food access caused by every natural disaster, each global incident, every supply chain disruption, and creates a path for food banks that have been severely under resourced to assist Hawaii families with the growing need for food.

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

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

March 23, 2026

TO: The Honorable Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services

FROM: Ryan I. Yamane, Director

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

Hearing: March 25, 2026, Time 1:40 p.m.
Conference Room 225 & Via 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 DHS to alleviate food shortages in the State. DHS respectfully requests that the appropriation not replace or reduce budget priorities identified in the executive budget.

Most recently, to address the impacts of the 2025 federal government shutdown, DHS provided funds to the Hawaii Foodbank and its network to purchase and distribute food. 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.

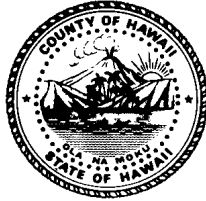
However, at this time, DHS is focused on implementing programmatic changes required by the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA), Public Law 119-21, and does not currently have sufficient administrative capacity and resources to initiate and oversee a new program.

If the bill continues through session, 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 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
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March 24, 2026

HEARING BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Wednesday, March 25 2026
1:40 PM
CONFERENCE ROOM 225

TESTIMONY ON HB 2208 HD1 Relating to Food Security

Aloha Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair McKelvey and Members of the Committee,

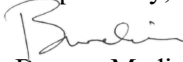
I am Benson Medina, Director of the Department of Research and Development, County of Hawai'i. One of the agricultural objectives of this department is to support collaboration, innovation, resource development, and programmatic sustainability throughout the food system to reduce food waste, improve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

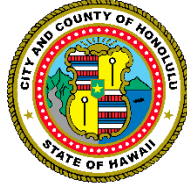
Respectfully,


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

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RICK BLANGIARDI
MAYOR
MEIA



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

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

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

BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Wednesday, March 25, 2026, 1:40 PM
Conference RM 225 and Via Videoconference

TO: Sen. Joy San Buenaventura, Chair, Sen. Angus McKelvey, Vice Chair, and
Members of the Committee on Health and Human Services

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.

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

Dear Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair McKelvey, 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.¹ Especially with the highest cost of living and most expensive groceries in the nation,² 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.³

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.⁴

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

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

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

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

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



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
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services
Wednesday, March 25, 2026, at 1:40PM

Dear Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair McKelvey, 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.¹

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.²

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.

¹ 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.

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



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Joe Carter, Coca-Cola Bottling of Hawaii, Odom, *Advisor*
Eddie Asato, Pint Size Hawaii, *Advisor*
Gary Okimoto, Safeway, *Advisor*
Maile Miyashiro, C&S Wholesale, *Immediate Past Chair*

TO: Committee on Health and Human Services
FROM: HAWAII FOOD INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION
Lauren Zirbel, Executive Director

DATE: March 25, 2026

TIME: 1:40pm

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.



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e-mail info@hfbf.org; www.hfbf.org

March 25, 2026

HEARING BEFORE THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

TESTIMONY ON HB 2208, HD1
RELATING TO FOOD SECURITY

Conference Room 225 & Videoconference
1:40 PM

Aloha Chair San Buenaventura, Vice-Chair McKelvey, 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.



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Waimanalo, O'ahu

Vincent Kimura
Honolulu, O'ahu

Natalie Urminska
Kauai

Aloha Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair McKelvey, and Members of the Senate Health and Human Services Committee,

The Hawaii Farmers Union is a 501(c)(5) agricultural advocacy nonprofit representing a network of over 2,500 family farmers and their supporters across the Hawaiian Islands. **HFU 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 Hawaii faces food insecurity. HB2208 establishes the Hawaii 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 Hawaii'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 Hawaii-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 Hawaii'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 Hawaii family.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Hunter Heavilin
Advocacy Director
Hawaii Farmers Union



Senate Committee on Health & Human Services

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

March 25th, 2026 at 1:40pm; Conference Room 225

Aloha Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair McKelvey 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 4, Kunia, Hawaii, 96759 || 808-622-9026 || www.agstewardshiphawaii.org

March 23, 2026

Aloha e Chair Sen Buenaventura, Vice Chair McKelvey, and Members of the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services,

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

On behalf of Agriculture Stewardship Hawai'i, we strongly support HB 2208 HD1, 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 HD1 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 HD1.

Warm wishes,

Dr. Amanda Shaw, PhD, Statewide Food Systems Coordinator

Email: 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*



2026 Network Members

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

hawaiihungeraction.org

Senate Committee on Health & Human Services

Wednesday, February 25, 2026, at 1:40PM

RE: Support for HB 2208, Relating to Food Security

Dear Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair McKelvey, 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, with many of our members at the frontlines of response efforts for disasters like last week's devastating floods. Whether it is in response to floods, wildfires, a pandemic, a government shutdown, or just the day-to-day emergency of needing to put food on the table, our emergency food partners are there to respond to the community's needs. This is crucial in an economy when many families are just one paycheck away from financial devastation. **These providers 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 our islands' agricultural economy. A diverse food supply chain is essential for responding to economic disruptions, with distribution points that can source locally and from outside the islands as needed. This program guarantees that nutritious food is available to more families, supporting local farmers, and even reducing farm food waste across the islands.

Mahalo for your leadership and for your consideration of this important legislation.

HB-2208-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 5:25:25 AM

Testimony for HHS on 3/25/2026 1:40:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Christopher Dean	Testifying for Clean the Pacific	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We support this bill. I don't think there's really much to say here, who isn't in favor of food security? Right now we rely on the United States mainland to provide us with the majority of our food. Given the state of chaos in the world right now, I think we should be moving as quickly as possible towards food independence. This bill is one step in that direction.

HB-2208-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 1:04:00 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/25/2026 1:40:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
laurel brier	Testifying for Kauai Climate Action Coalition	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

One in three households in Hawai'i facing food insecurity. Let's take action to ensure that everyone in our community has access to healthy food. This bill will help 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 climate resilient Hawai'i. Strong support for HB2208



'Ahahui o nā Kauka

677 Ala Moana Blvd., Suite 1015

Honolulu HI 96813

Phone 808.548.0270

E-mail huikauka@gmail.com

2025-2026 Advocacy Committee

Marcus Kāwika Iwane, MD
President

Kapono Chong-Hanssen, MD
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Natalie Young-Albanese, MD

Jordan Lee, MD

March 22, 2026

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair

Senator Angus L.K. McKelvey, Vice Chair

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.

HB-2208-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 8:56:08 AM

Testimony for HHS on 3/25/2026 1:40:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Susan B Roberts Emery	Testifying for Green Party of Hawai'i	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair McKelvey, and honorable members of committee,

My name is Susan RobertsEmery, as Co Chair of the Green Party of Hawai'i and on behalf of our members we are in VERY STRONG SUPPORT of HB2208 HD1. This bill 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. This program ensures fresh, locally grown produce reaches families facing food insecurity. This is a win win for our communities.

The Green Party of Hawai'i, urges you to Pass HB2208 HD1 . Our communities are counting on you.

Aloha Always,

Susan RobertsEmery

Green Party of Hawai'i

Paauiilo



To: The Senate Committee on Health and Human Services (HHS)
From: Sherry Pollack, Co-Founder, 350Hawaii.org
Date: Wednesday, March 25, 2026, 1:40pm

In strong support of HB2208 HD1

Aloha Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair McKelvey, and members of the HHS committee,

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



Email: communications@ulupono.com

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Wednesday, March 25, 2026 — 1:40 p.m.

Ulupono Initiative supports HB 2208 HD1, Relating to Food Security

Dear Chair San Buenaventura 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



**Testimony to the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services
Wednesday, March 25, 2025; 1:40 p.m.
State Capitol, Conf. Room 225
Via Videoconference**

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

Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair McKelvey, 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
Wednesday, March 25, 2025; 1:40 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 addition funding for that program in 2025.

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

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

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

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

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

HB-2208-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 3:57:16 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/25/2026 1:40:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Elaine SanJose	Testifying for Kahua O Kakou Corporation	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha mai kākou(Hello), my name is Elaine Poipe Keali'iwahāmanā Makaio SanJose along with my 'ohana (family), 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.

Mahalo for your consideration!

Elaine Poipe, Keali'iwahāmanā Makaio SanJose, HiloTown, Hawai'i



Malaki 25, 2026
1:40 PM

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
Senator Angus L.K. McKelvey, Vice Chair

Conference Room 225 & Videoconference
State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street

Re: HB2208 - RELATING TO FOOD SECURITY.

Aloha Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair McKelvey and honorable members of the committee:

The Prince Kūhiō Hawaiian Civic Club (PKHCC) strongly **supports** HB2208, which establishes and appropriates funds for the Hawaii Farm to Families Program to alleviate food shortages in the State.

The club strongly supports the Hawaii Farm to Families Program. One in three households in Hawai'i faces food insecurity; keiki, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander, Hispanic, and Filipino families are hit hardest. Food banks and over five hundred local farms already provide millions of meals and significant local economic support. This program will deliver fresh, Hawaii-grown food to families, create reliable markets for local farmers, and strengthen a resilient, mālama 'āina food system.

Founded in 1964, the Prince Kūhiō Hawaiian Civic Club was established to promote the education and social welfare of people of Hawaiian ancestry. Its objectives include supporting high ethical standards in business, industry, and professional fields.

Mahalo for your consideration of our position.

Me ke aloha,

Shauna Kahiapo, Esq.
Pelekikena

president@pkhcc.org

HB-2208-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 6:45:51 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/25/2026 1:40:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Soo Sun Choe	Testifying for Jinto Farms	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair San Buenaventura, Committee Members,

I am writing to oexpress my support for HB 2208 HD1 because as a farmer and mother of four, I believe this bill is a good step towards promoting island food security, supporting the livelihoods of local farmers, and ensuring that there is an existing on island food supply in the case of natural disasters.

Mahalo for your time,

Soo Sun Choe



Date: March 25, 2026

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

Aloha Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair McKelvey, 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 HD1.

With aloha,

Amy Miller
President and CEO, Hawai'i Foodbank

March 22, 2026

To: Chair Lisa Marten, Vice Chair Ikaika Old and the House Committee on Human Services and Homelessness

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

Aloha,

I am writing in **support of HB2208 HD1** which establishes and appropriates funds through grants for the Hawai'i Farm to Families Program to alleviate food shortages in Hawai'i. Hawai'i's high cost of living (both housing costs and food) and reliance on food shipped imported from the Mainland have left as many as one-third of the population food insecure. Furthermore, the limited amount of fresh, local food leaves many of the population reliant on ultraprocessed food which is increasingly shown to be deleterious to health. The extended difficulty of food acquisition during the pandemic and the more recent federal government shutdown have demonstrated the precarious nature of fresh local food availability. This bill would strengthen the connection between local farmers and community food systems, and furthermore, encourage the continued expansion of locally-grown fresh food. By funding the purchase of locally grown food for the food banks within Hawaii, both the residents of Hawaii and the local farmers would be able to benefit from this support.

I urge this committee to pass HB2208 HD1 which establishes and appropriates grant funds for the Farm to Families program. The latter program would provide grant funds for the purchase, storage, and distribution of fresh, locally grown foods to Hawaii food banks. The additional funding will help in alleviating food insecurity and hunger in the Hawaiian Islands. The bill will simultaneously also continue to provide encouragement to the local farming sector to grow more food. Reducing the reliance on imported food is a positive endeavor for all sectors of Hawaii's food system.

Mahalo,
Carlin Rose McFadden & the Food+ Policy Team
#fixourfoodsystem

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

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



aloha@pacificbirthcollective.org
pacificbirthcollective.org

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

PBC Board

March 23rd, 2026

Kiana Rowley
President

Makalani Franco-Francis
Vice President

Kristina Statler
Secretary

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Treasurer

Wyonette Wallet

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 HD1**, 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.

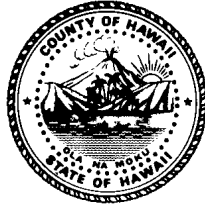
Mahalo nui loa,
Kiana Rowley, Board President



aloha@pacificbirthcollective.org
pacificbirthcollective.org

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

Jennifer Kagiwada
Council Member District 2 South Hilo



Office: (808) 961-8272
jennifer.kagiwada@hawaiicounty.gov

HAWAI'I COUNTY COUNCIL - DISTRICT 2

25 Aupuni Street • Hilo, Hawai'i 96720

DATE: March 24, 2026
TO: Senate Committee on Health and Human Services
FROM: Jennifer Kagiwada, Council Member
Council District 2
SUBJECT: HB2208 HD1

Aloha Chair Buenaventura, Vice Chair Angus, 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,

Jenn Kagiwada

HB-2208-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/20/2026 2:14:09 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/25/2026 1:40:00 PM

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

Comments:

I, Johnnie-Mae L. Perry, Support

2208 HB RELATING TO FOOD SECURITY.

HB-2208-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/20/2026 2:15:23 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/25/2026 1:40:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sara Lenzer Medeiros	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support this important bill as a step toward sustainable food supply, especially important for vulnerable Kupuna and families on the neighbor islands.

HB-2208-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/20/2026 3:29:57 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/25/2026 1:40:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marcia Kemble	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Greetings Committee Members,

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

Mahalo for your attention.

Marcia Kemble

Makiki

HB-2208-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/20/2026 7:18:22 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/25/2026 1:40:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
William Caron	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

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

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

HB-2208-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/21/2026 5:46:56 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/25/2026 1:40:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Benjamin Narwold	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

One in three households in Hawai'i faces food insecurity, and our most vulnerable populations need our support. I strongly support this critical bill that 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. This program ensures fresh, locally grown produce reaches families facing food insecurity, and helps alleviate hunger in our state. 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 climate 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!

HB-2208-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/21/2026 8:01:08 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/25/2026 1:40:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
B.A. McClintock	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

-- 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 climate resiliency, and avoids the greenhouse gases that would have been emitted from shipping in food. HB2208 HD1 is a triple win for our families, our farmers, and our climate!

Please support this important bill. Mahalo.

HB-2208-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/21/2026 8:03:12 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/25/2026 1:40:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Committee Members.

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

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 climate resiliency, and avoids the greenhouse gases that would have been emitted from shipping in food. HB2208 HD1 is a triple win for our families, our farmers, and our climate!

Mahalo,

Georgia Hoopes, Kalaheo

HB-2208-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/21/2026 8:54:05 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/25/2026 1:40:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Aimee E McCullough	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support this critical bill that 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. This program ensures fresh, locally grown produce reaches families facing food insecurity, and helps alleviate hunger in our state.

Mahalo!

HB-2208-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/21/2026 9:14:30 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/25/2026 1:40:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ruta Jordans	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We have food insecurity in Hawaii. This is one way to bring fresh, nutritious food, especially to children, while also investing in local farmers. We can't depend on foreign countries to continue to feed us. Please support HB2208.

HB-2208-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/21/2026 10:52:28 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/25/2026 1:40:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cory Harden	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha legislators,

Please support this bill. No one in Hawai'i should be going hungry. Counting on food supply chains thousands of miles long is too risky.

mahalo,

Cory Harden

HB-2208-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 12:50:24 AM

Testimony for HHS on 3/25/2026 1:40:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Brodie Lockard	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill.

HB-2208-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 8:44:06 AM

Testimony for HHS on 3/25/2026 1:40:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
irene kloepfer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha I strongly support this bill. It's time we put the welfare of the people first. Having access to fresh healthy food should be everyone's priority. Please pass this bill now. Mahalo. Irene

HB-2208-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 8:49:31 AM

Testimony for HHS on 3/25/2026 1:40:00 PM

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

Comments:

My name is Mary Afable and I live in Hilo.

I support this measure because it will help 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 climate resilient Hawai'i.

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
Senator Angus L. K. McKelvey, Vice Chair

HEARING:

Wednesday, March 25, 2026 at 1:40 pm
Conference Room 225 & Videoconference

TESTIMONY IN **SUPPORT** OF HB 2208, HD 1 - RELATING TO FOOD SECURITY.

Aloha Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair McKelvey, 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. House Bill 2208, HD1 establishes and appropriates funds for the Hawaii Farm to Families Program under the Department of Human Services to alleviate food shortages in the State and requires reports to the Legislature before the Regular Sessions of 2027 and 2028.

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

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

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

Mahalo nui for supporting Hawai'i students and families,

Christine L. Andrews, J.D.
Wailuku, Maui

HB-2208-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 4:30:59 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/25/2026 1:40:00 PM

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

Comments:

STRONG SUPPORT!!! MAHALO!

HB-2208-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 4:32:30 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/25/2026 1:40:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Conner Birdsall	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly believe we need to allow more local food. So that all of Hawai'i can reach full food sustainability. One of the many major priorities we need yo have

HB-2208-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 6:17:03 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/25/2026 1:40:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Katherine Fryer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

With one in three 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. HB2208 will help provide critical access to fresh, culturally relevant foods for low income families, while also investing in local farmers and growers, who are critical to strengthening our community food systems and ensuring Hawai‘i's health and resilience.

I respectfully urge you to please pass this measure.

HB-2208-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 6:29:52 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/25/2026 1:40:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Melissa Barker	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Honorable Members,

I am writing to ask that you support HB2298 HD1 which establishes and appropriates funds for the Hawaii Farm to Families Program to alleviate food shortages in the State.

Thank you for your attention and consideration.

Melissa Barker

Kapaa, HI

HB-2208-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 8:26:01 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/25/2026 1:40:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
John Fitzpatrick	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair San Buenaventura, Chair Dela Cruz, and Members of the Committees,

My name is John "Fitz" Fitzpatrick, and I am writing to express my strong support for HB2208 HD1.

I am a resident of Makawao and a Science Educator at Kūlanihāko‘i High School in Kihei. This dual perspective allows me to see both ends of our island's food system: the agricultural productivity of our Upcountry region and the nutritional needs of the students and families I serve in South Maui.

HB2208 HD1 represents a vital investment in our state's resilience. Establishing the Hawaii Farm to Families Program creates a direct, funded link between our local farmers and those facing food insecurity. In my biology and environmental science classes, we often discuss the fragility of a food system that relies on 90% imports. By supporting food banks in the purchase and distribution of Hawaii-grown produce, we are not just feeding people; we are strengthening our local economy and reducing our carbon footprint.

From a pedagogical standpoint, I see the impact of food security every day. Students cannot engage in complex scientific inquiry if they are hungry or lacking access to fresh, nutrient-dense food. Access to local produce shouldn't be a luxury—it should be a baseline for the health of our keiki and our community.

This bill is a common-sense solution that supports our farmers, provides for our most vulnerable residents, and builds a more self-sufficient Hawaii.

I respectfully urge your committees to pass HB2208 HD1.

Mahalo for your time and for the opportunity to testify.

John Fitzpatrick Resident of Makawao

Science Educator, Kūlanihāko‘i High School (Kihei)

March 22, 2026

To: Chair Joy A. San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Angus L.K. McKelvey, and the Senate Committee on Health & Human Services

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.

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: 3/22/2026 9:54:29 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/25/2026 1:40:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair McKelvey, and Members of the Senate Committee on Human Services,

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 Hawai'i 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: 3/23/2026 6:25:17 AM

Testimony for HHS on 3/25/2026 1:40:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Karin Hoida	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

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 climate 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!

HB-2208-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 6:38:59 AM

Testimony for HHS on 3/25/2026 1:40:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
William Hoida	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Bills supporting getting fresh grown food to local Hawaii families sounds like a win for everyone. Mahalo!

HB-2208-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 9:01:41 AM

Testimony for HHS on 3/25/2026 1:40:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Caroline Azelski	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

In support of. Thank you.

HB-2208-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 9:03:22 AM

Testimony for HHS on 3/25/2026 1:40:00 PM

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

Comments:

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

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

Food insecurity is a very real and urgent issue in Hawai‘i, with one in three households struggling to consistently access enough food, including a significant number of children. This reality is unacceptable in a place as abundant as our islands, and it calls for immediate, meaningful action.

HB2208 HD1 is a critical step toward addressing this crisis by establishing and funding the Hawai‘i Farm to Families Program. This program not only helps ensure that families in need have access to fresh, healthy, and culturally relevant foods, but also strengthens our local food systems by directly supporting Hawai‘i farmers and producers.

By investing in locally grown food, this measure keeps resources within our communities, reduces reliance on imported goods, and builds long-term resilience in the face of climate change and supply chain disruptions. At the same time, it provides essential support to food banks so they can purchase, store, and distribute fresh local products to families who need it most.

This bill represents a holistic solution—it addresses hunger, uplifts local agriculture, and advances a more sustainable and self-sufficient Hawai‘i. It is a meaningful investment in the health and well-being of our communities.

I respectfully urge you to **PASS HB2208 HD1**.

Me ke aloha ‘āina,
Nanea Lo, 96826
Sierra Club of Hawai‘i Member
Hawai‘i Workers Center Board Member
Clean Elections Hawai‘i Member
Honolulu Tenants Union Member
350 Hawai‘i Member
Carbon Cashback Hawai‘i Member
Hawai‘i Tax Fairness Coalition Member

HB-2208-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 10:21:08 AM

Testimony for HHS on 3/25/2026 1:40:00 PM

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

Comments:

support

Mahalo,

Ann V Saffery

Honolulu, HI

HB-2208-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 11:48:28 AM

Testimony for HHS on 3/25/2026 1:40:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kenric Murayama	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

HB2208 is important to help address the issues of food insecurity facing our state. With inflation and rising costs of things like housing, fuel, and healthcare, food insecurity is amplified as families have to make difficult choices. Any action to alleviate food insecurity for those most vulnerable will give them and their families the opportunity to be productive, healthy members of our communities. I urge you to support passage of this bill.

HB-2208-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 12:43:36 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/25/2026 1:40:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Gil Agaran	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The Honorable Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
The Honorable Angus L.K. McKelvey, Vice Chair

Senate Committee on Health and Human Services

I strongly support the Farm to Families bill (HB2208, HD1). I am a board member of the Maui Food Bank.

With a third of Hawai'i's households 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 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 local 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 investing in local agriculture, and reducing our dependence on imported goods, creating a more sustainable food system for Hawai'i. This measure also offers a direct benefit to Hawai'i's farmers, providing a steady and fair market for local produce. Farmers can plan for future growth knowing their products will feed their neighbors in need.

Finally, 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.

Please support moving this measure forward.

HB-2208-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 12:48:27 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/25/2026 1:40:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Glenn Choy	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support this bill. Thank you.

HB-2208-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 1:03:23 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/25/2026 1:40:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jade Santos	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

3/23/26

Testimony in Support of Farm to Families

Aloha,

I am Jade Santos, the Student Services Coordinator for Wahiawa Elementary. I am writing in strong support of Farm to Families.

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

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

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

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

Thank you,

Jade Santos

Honolulu, Hawai'i

HB-2208-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 1:19:35 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/25/2026 1:40:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Monique Wedderburn	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in Support of Farm to Families

March 23, 2026

Aloha,

My name is Monique Wedderburn, and I am a resident of Waipahu, Hawai‘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.

As a member of this community, I believe that no family in Hawai‘i should go without access to nutritious food. Supporting local agriculture while addressing food insecurity is exactly the kind of forward-thinking investment our state needs.

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

Mahalo,
Monique Wedderburn
Waipahu, Hawai'i 96797

The Office of Dr. Joseph Keawe`aimoku Kaholokula

March 23, 2026

Re: Support for the "Farm to Families" bill

Aloha nui,

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

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

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

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

Sincerely,

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

Joseph Keawe`aimoku Kaholokula, Ph.D.

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: 3/23/2026 3:26:24 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/25/2026 1:40:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Bianca West	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

March 23, 2026

To: Chair Joy San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Angus McKelvey, and the Senate Committee on Health & Human Services

Subject: **HB 2208 HD1**, Relating to Food Security

Aloha, I am Bianca West writing in **support of HB2208 HD1**. This bill requests that the Department of Human Services (DH) provide grant funding for the continuation of the Farms to Families program. These funds will be used by state food banks to purchase, store, and transport fresh, Hawai'i-grown or -produced food to food-insecure communities around the state.

Currently, in Hawai'i, 1 in 3 households are experiencing food insecurity. 34% of Hawai'i's keiki are experiencing hunger. Meanwhile, we're importing 90% of our food from out of state & have seen over 80,000 acres of farmland lost in the last decade. With funds from Farms to Families, the Hawai'i food bank has been able to distribute 10 million pounds of Hawaii grown food. Food banks typically have a large selection of shelf stable products & fresh foods are neglected. Farm to Families help provide the funding and storage for local fresh produce, whose nutrition is incomparable to a product that sat on a barrage or airplane. Farms to Families is a very successful program that reinvests in our local economy, provides a stable market for our farmers, and, most importantly, connects our community with fresh local foods.

I urge the committee to **pass HB 2208 HD1** to continue helping feed our communities with fresh, locally grown food, create a stable market space for Hawaii's farmers, and invest in our local economy.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

Bianca West

HB-2208-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 3:49:53 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/25/2026 1:40:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Erin Hagan	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.

Mahalo for your consideration!
Erin Hagan

Waialua

HB-2208-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 3:54:41 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/25/2026 1:40:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha,

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

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

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

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

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

Thank you,

Molly Mamaril

HB-2208-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 3:57:57 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/25/2026 1:40:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Bianca Isaki	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and 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.

Bianca Isaki, Kane'ohe

HB-2208-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 4:02:26 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/25/2026 1:40:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Members:

I am submitting testimony today in support of HB2208 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.

Mahalo for this opportunity to provide testimony!

Noelle Lindenmann, Kailua-Kona

HB-2208-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 4:09:13 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/25/2026 1:40:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dennis O'Shea	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hawaii must become food independant before unseen events disrupt our present system.

Ptease pass this bill.

HB-2208-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 4:30:37 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/25/2026 1:40:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ted Bohlen	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

SUPPORT!

HB-2208-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 4:34:30 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/25/2026 1:40:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Breon Michel	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.

Mahalo for your consideration!

Breon Michel, Kula HI

HB-2208-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 4:38:05 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/25/2026 1:40:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Safia Gravel	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in Support of Farm to Families

Aloha,

I am writing in strong support of Farm to Families.

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

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

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

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

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

As a single parent with children struggling with the high costs of living I know how hard it is to afford healthy food for my family so that we can be healthy and I know that there are many other families facing similar challenges. Even with a full time job and SNAP, I still can't afford to buy enough food for our family.

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,

Safia Gravel

Hilo, HI

HB-2208-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 4:39:40 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/25/2026 1:40:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mary Lu Kelley	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha from Kauai.

I support HB2208 HDI because it establishes the Hawai'i Farm to Families Program to alleviate food shortages in the State.

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.

Thak you,

Mary Lu Kelley, Koloa!

HB-2208-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 4:39:56 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/25/2026 1:40:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Karen A Valasek	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, I am writing as an individual in strong support of HB2208

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.

Mahalo, Karen Valasek

HB-2208-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 5:02:15 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/25/2026 1:40:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
chelsea pang	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support farm to families to support fame and healthy eating

HB-2208-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 5:03:18 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/25/2026 1:40:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michele Nihipali	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.

Mahalo for your consideration!

Michele Nihipali

54-074 A Kam Hwy.

Hauula, HI 96717

HB-2208-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 5:04:05 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/25/2026 1:40:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
carole richelieu	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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.

Hawaii Kai voter

HB-2208-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 5:50:28 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/25/2026 1:40:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kristen Young	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, Please **support HB 2208 HD1**. We know that food insecurity is prevalent in Hawai‘i. Making it easier for food banks to purchase locally grown food would benefit both farmers and our communities. Local farmers often struggle with access to markets. This bill 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.

Mahalo for your consideration!

Kristen Young
Honolulu, HI 96813

HB-2208-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 5:52:33 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/25/2026 1:40:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Stephanie Austin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support this bill to increase Hawaii's food security and support local farming. We are extremely vulnerable, more than any other state, with our distance from food sources: and unable to provide more than a very small percentage of our state's needs from local sources.

HB-2208-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 6:00:41 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/25/2026 1:40:00 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.

Mahalo for your consideration!

kimdonghyeon

HB-2208-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 6:22:33 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/25/2026 1:40:00 PM

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

Comments:

I urge you to 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.

Thank you

HB-2208-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 6:48:11 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/25/2026 1:40:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kaleiheana-a-Pohaku Stormcrow	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair McKelvey and Committee Members,

I am writing in strong **support** of HB 2208 HD1.

One in three households in Hawaii report experiencing food insecurity. A staggering 95% of the food we consume is imported despite having some of the most fertile soil in the world. We need to Increase the ability of food banks to purchase locally grown food; this will benefit communities and farmers. 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.

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.

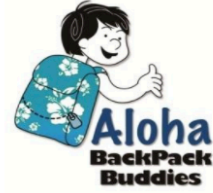
Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

Kaleiheana Stormcrow



Maui Food Bank

Aloha Backpack Buddies Program (ABB)



March 23, 2026

Aloha :)

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

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

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

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

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

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

Thank you,

Addie Ann Texeira-Browne

Addie Ann Texeira-Browne

Kula, Maui

Aloha Backpack Buddies Program Coordinator

Maui Food Bank

Cell: (808) 303-7068

Email: addie@mauifoodbank.org

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

HB-2208-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 8:36:50 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/25/2026 1:40:00 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.

Mahalo for your consideration!

Andrew Isoda
Lahaina, Mau‘i

HB-2208-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 9:23:43 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/25/2026 1:40:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shana Laririt	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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.

Mahalo for your consideration!

Shana Laririt, Makawao

HB-2208-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/24/2026 12:17:49 AM

Testimony for HHS on 3/25/2026 1:40:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair and Committee Members:

I am writing in **support of HB 2208 HD1.**

This measure is particularly meaningful to me because I was born and raised Upcountry, Maui, in a little town called Kaupakalua, surrounded by pastures. My grandparents and parents and relatives raised animals, grew vegetables and planted food trees that continue to bear fruit today for our families and future generations. We were also raised to share this abundance with our neighbors!

Unfortunately, too many families in Hawai'i face food insecurity and lack access to healthy and nutritious foods and vegetables. The proposed 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.

This bill is a win-win for Hawai'i and I humbly ask that you pass this HB2208 HD1 Relating to Food Security.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Carrie Ann Shirota, Esq.

Honolulu, Hawai'i

HB-2208-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/24/2026 4:52:56 AM

Testimony for HHS on 3/25/2026 1:40:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Noel Shaw	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Take care families. Take care farmers. Connect the two and we'll have strong and restored food systems.

Please pass this bill and invest in care work for our most vulnerable. Access to locally grown foods is truly an act of humanity, keeping folks well and connected.

Further, when you invest in Farm to Family, we see decreased waste affiliated with transporting and producing these foods. As islands in the middle of the ocean, we need solid waste management to ensure we have the space needed to live.

HB-2208-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/24/2026 5:07:17 AM

Testimony for HHS on 3/25/2026 1:40:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Buenaventura, Vice Chair McKelvey and Members of the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services:

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

HB-2208-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/24/2026 6:19:50 AM

Testimony for HHS on 3/25/2026 1:40:00 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.

Mahalo for your consideration!

Val Hertzog, Kilauea

HB-2208-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/24/2026 7:20:41 AM

Testimony for HHS on 3/25/2026 1:40:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Diane Ware	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Legislators,

With one in three 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 will help 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 climate resilient Hawai‘i.

Sincerely,

Diane Ware Volcano 96785

HB-2208-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/24/2026 8:09:47 AM

Testimony for HHS on 3/25/2026 1:40:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lisa Galloway	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Let's feed ourselves!

HB-2208-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/24/2026 8:14:56 AM

Testimony for HHS on 3/25/2026 1:40:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Valerie Weiss	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in storng support of this bill. Mahalo.

HB-2208-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/24/2026 8:52:28 AM

Testimony for HHS on 3/25/2026 1:40:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
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. It's a win for farmers and for food-insecure families. Thank you.

Aloha Hawai'i State Legislature,

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

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

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

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

Sincerely,

Sherry Pollack	Statewide	350Hawaii
Amanda Shaw	Statewide	Agriculture Stewardship Hawai'i
Marcus Iwane	Statewide	Ahahui o na Kauka, the Association of Native Hawaiian Physicians
Katie Crowe	Hawai'i	Aina Exotics LLC
Tim Munley	Kaua'i	Aloha Church
Cathy Kerch	O'ahu	Aloha Diaper Banl
Norma Atiga	O'ahu	Alternative Structures International
Keolamaikalani Taniguchi	O'ahu	Armed Services YMCA
Ayme Becnel	O'ahu	Better Tomorrows
Asaka Herman	Kaua'i	Boys & Girls Club of Hawaii
Aaron Tsang	O'ahu	Calvary Assembly of God
Lillian Carreira	O'ahu	Catholic charities
Ron Garrison	Kaua'i	Church of the Pacific/Ho`okipa Kauai Food Pantries
Farley Bayudan	O'ahu	City of Joy Assembly of God - Ohana Food Distribution
Farley Bayudan	O'ahu	City of Joy Assembly of God, Inc.
David Worker	O'ahu	Community People Ministries
Kathryn Ellman	O'ahu	community volunteer
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 Coalition of Kauai County
Violette Ishikawa	O'ahu	Giving Hope Hawaii
Leilani Lori Bishop	O'ahu	Grace and Favor Church
Zaasha Gonsalves	Maui	Hale Mahaolu
Kari Hagedorn	Maui	Hana Farmers Market
Kari Hagedorn	Maui	Hāna 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
Madison Barker	O'ahu	Hawai'i Youth Food Council
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
Kimey Kalua	O'ahu	HUGS Hawaii
ESTRELITA.	O'ahu	Jesus is Alive Fellowship
ANDRES		
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.

Kayla Marin	Kaua'i	Keala Foundation
Stephanie Iona	Kaua'i	Kekaha Agriculture Assn
Stephanie Iona	Kaua'i	Kekaha Agriculture Association
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
Lisa Yanagida	Maui	Lanakila Club
Rona Yagi	O'ahu	Lanakila Pacific
Fukumoto		
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
Steve Ulene	Maui	Maui Food Bank
Addie Texeira-Browne	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
Sadie Lasell	O'ahu	New Life Body Of Christ Christian Church
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
Sheila Medeiros	O'ahu	Radical Hale
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.	
Rev.Peter Wallace	O'ahu	St. Timothy's Episcopal Church, 'Aiea	
Peter Wallace	O'ahu	St. Timothy's Episcopal Church, 'Aiea	
Thao Nguyen	O'ahu	Sts. Peter & Paul Catholic Church	
Kristin Frost Albrecht	Hawai'i	The Food Basket Inc., Hawai'i Island's Food Bank	
Cynthia Maile Hatfield	O'ahu	The Food Pantry at St. Clement	
John Heidel	O'ahu	The Interfaith Alliance of Hawai'i	
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	
Johnny Joseph	Kaua'i	Tropical Flowers Express	
Keawe'aimoku Kaholokula	O'ahu	University of Hawaii	
Mariailiana stark	O'ahu	University of Hawaii at manoa	
Brian Randle	O'ahu	US Navy	
Elizabeth Kekua	O'ahu	Voice of God Ministries	
Liliuokalani Coyle	O'ahu	Voice of God Ministries	
Elizabeth Kekua	O'ahu	Voice of God Ministries	
Melissa Moriguchi	O'ahu	Wahiawa Elementary School	
Moana Silva	O'ahu	Waianae Baptist Church	
Fuli Soa	O'ahu	Waimānalo Elementary & Intermediate School Family Resource Center	
Kelsey Kim	O'ahu	Wellspring Covenant Church	
Rebecca Stringer	O'ahu	Wellspring Covenant Church	
Cheryl Lum	Kaua'i	YWCA of Kauai	
Louise Wolcott	O'ahu	Norman Van Vactor	Kaua'i
Lilson Maile Laau	O'ahu	Maureen Copeskey	O'ahu
Randy Junkman	O'ahu	Tangela Manuelwatts	O'ahu
Lynda Messier	O'ahu	Carolyn	O'ahu
Hervie Messier	O'ahu	Robert and Jean Johnson	O'ahu
Jennifer Baxter	Kaua'i	Stacey Hendrickson	O'ahu
Valerie Chang	Kaua'i	Annika Seavey	O'ahu
Kathryn Ellman	O'ahu	Kekua Kobashigawa	O'ahu
Faith Faustorilla	O'ahu	Māhealani Kobashigawa	O'ahu

Caroline Wilhite	O'ahu	Margaret Reager	O'ahu
Taylor Bair	O'ahu	Monzell Davis	O'ahu
Diane Bruce	O'ahu	Christine Andrews	Maui
Leilani Kim	O'ahu	Bridgetmarie Kaolulo	O'ahu
Nina Yopp	O'ahu	Chelsea McDonough	O'ahu
Hans Van Tilburg	O'ahu	Noel Shaw	O'ahu
Tricia Coloma	O'ahu	Rik Masterson	Hawai'i
Carlo Cayetano	O'ahu	Jordan Smith	O'ahu
Allyn Kau	O'ahu	Lauta'amutafea Shen	O'ahu
Kiana Lee	O'ahu	Jenna Hausvik	O'ahu
Michelle Frederick	O'ahu	Kailey Wilt	O'ahu
Reton Shiu	O'ahu	Kimberly Golis-Robello	O'ahu
Jonathan Wong	O'ahu	Cristal Mortensen	O'ahu
Christine Evans	O'ahu	Rachel Reyes-Huynh	O'ahu
Brittany Murray	O'ahu	Joyce Umali Perreira	O'ahu
Jennifer Hudson	O'ahu	Lori Lynn Aoki	O'ahu
Ann Stagnaro	O'ahu	Caroline Azelski	Hawai'i
Tom Stagnaro	O'ahu	Brandi Saragosa	Maui
Athens p	O'ahu	Keith Yap	Kaua'i
Katherine Park	O'ahu	Mitchell Matsumori-Kelly	O'ahu
Lori Yuh	O'ahu	Emma Waters	Hawai'i
Kristen Hahn	O'ahu	Jared Kawatani	O'ahu
Sandra Pepee	O'ahu	Julia Jay	Statewide
Lane Daigle	O'ahu	Mario Tabaquin	O'ahu
Marcos Cruz Ortiz	O'ahu	Elna Nagasako	O'ahu
Claudia Moreno	O'ahu	Tayla-Angel Jimenez	O'ahu
Roy Kimura	O'ahu	Molly Mamaril	O'ahu
Ce'Lene Sakellis	O'ahu	Lauren Nelson	Maui
Aalia Meer	O'ahu	Anne Chamness	O'ahu
Natalie Hasegawa	O'ahu	Elise krause	O'ahu
Valline Schmidt	O'ahu	Rebecca Hartman	O'ahu
John Kojima	O'ahu	Lindsay Domantay	O'ahu
LaTrisha		Leigh Ann Lopez	O'ahu
Granston	O'ahu	Elizabeth Grossman	O'ahu
Meredith Torres	O'ahu	Genevieve Mumma	O'ahu
Franz Schnell	O'ahu	Cyd Hoffeld	Hawai'i
Adriann Gin	O'ahu	Annette Tashiro	O'ahu
Christine Mitchell	O'ahu	An Vo	O'ahu
Leticia Calles	O'ahu	Christen Oliveira	O'ahu
Holly Elder	O'ahu	Ariana Hansen	O'ahu
Lei-Anne Jones	O'ahu	Debbie Millikan	O'ahu
Michael Jones	O'ahu	Charlene Hosenfeld	O'ahu
Nanami Jones	O'ahu	Gayle Goodman	O'ahu
Phyllis Krajewski	O'ahu	Sharon Stehlik	O'ahu
Eduardo	O'ahu	Curstyn Yoshimoto	O'ahu
Fiaalii Filisi	O'ahu	U'ilani Kapuaakuni	O'ahu
Rinka Shimizu	O'ahu	Kat Saneewong	O'ahu
Debra	O'ahu	Emi Kaneshiro	O'ahu
Kaawalauole	O'ahu	Franz Schnell	O'ahu
Connie Lu	O'ahu		
Jane George	O'ahu		

Jodie Paulos	O'ahu	Mae Althea Gallardo	O'ahu
Fran Gendrano	O'ahu	Gustavo de a Pena	O'ahu
Delmar J Bayang	O'ahu	Sheri Washburn	O'ahu
Daniel Smith	O'ahu	Deborah Miles	O'ahu
Bethany Ortiz-D'Amico	O'ahu	Lisa Wong	O'ahu
Travis Hipolito	O'ahu	Autasia Sakaria	O'ahu
Adele Tasaka	O'ahu	Shona Petersen	O'ahu
Lori Watkins	O'ahu	Darlene Gaco	O'ahu
Jayme Takaki	Statewide	Jacqueline Mapuana	O'ahu
David Jones	O'ahu	Kamehamehal	O'ahu
Veronica Sablan	O'ahu	Scott Sonoda	O'ahu
Mar Scott	O'ahu	Ramon De La Cruz	Statewide
Cheryl Hunt	O'ahu	Paula T. Ortiz	O'ahu
Liz Okun	O'ahu	Jane E Arnold	O'ahu
Carol Kinoshita	O'ahu	Me Manu-Lee	O'ahu
Lau	O'ahu	Vanessa Mamhot	O'ahu
Mary Ellen Rubio	O'ahu	Charlene Duplantier	O'ahu
Alexis Davidson	O'ahu	Alan Terasako	O'ahu
Laurie Nakama	O'ahu	Anna Gregorio	O'ahu
Sandra Schulman	O'ahu	Jimmy Fung	O'ahu
Kristi Hammond	O'ahu	Debra Auld	O'ahu
Raisa Kakigi	O'ahu	Ashlyn Pua Borges	O'ahu
Cindy Verdespina	O'ahu	Jane Arnold	O'ahu
Dale Jensen	O'ahu	Noel Shaw	O'ahu
michelle rainville	O'ahu	Joyce Aquino	O'ahu
Charlene Mancusi	O'ahu	Christine Andrews	Maui
Dan Fong	O'ahu	gayle goodman	O'ahu
Carol Nakamura	O'ahu	Gustavo de la Pena	O'ahu
Lynda Antonio	Kaua'i	Ward Whipple	Maui
Polina Dineva	O'ahu	Anton Avanozian	Maui
Kaeo Kim	O'ahu	tia pearson	O'ahu
Katina Marx	O'ahu	Annie Green	O'ahu
ingrid jansson	O'ahu	Pam Clifford	O'ahu
Norma Murayama	O'ahu	Laura Pokipala	O'ahu
Ginger Matusiak	O'ahu	Brianna Lloyd	O'ahu
Roger Breisch	O'ahu	Farley Bayudan	O'ahu
Lisa Brenneman	Statewide	Lindsay Domantay	O'ahu
Carlyne Averell	Statewide	Jennifer Baxter	Kaua'i
Charlotte Baker	O'ahu	Maeve O'Donnell Pax	Kaua'i
Michael Baker	O'ahu	Hailey Veltri	O'ahu
Malia Ellis	O'ahu	Monica esquivel	O'ahu
Charlie King	Kaua'i	Leihua Park	O'ahu
John Todt	O'ahu	Keala Menza	O'ahu
Nina Lum	O'ahu	Rachel Novotny	O'ahu
Gary Rickard	O'ahu	Barbara DeBaryshe	O'ahu
Kim Campbell	O'ahu	Eileen Sanchez	O'ahu
Russell	O'ahu	Risé Doi	O'ahu
Angeline Santos	O'ahu	Jeanne Herbert	O'ahu
Marion Berkline	O'ahu	D.Lee	O'ahu

Lorraine Asano	O'ahu	Walter Young	O'ahu
Marie Sode	O'ahu	John Stahl	O'ahu
Diane Decker	Kaua'i	Candy Green	O'ahu
Laetitia Thibault-Santoro	Statewide	Laura Kanetake	O'ahu
Elaine Allwine-Caspers	O'ahu	Dana Keawe	Hawai'i
Lauren Long	O'ahu	Jess Ivey	Kaua'i
Annie Green	O'ahu	Geraldine Baldassarre	Hawai'i
Lisa Kelliher	O'ahu	Cheryl Treiber-Kawaoka	O'ahu
Nina Jo-Ring	O'ahu	Joseph Godbout	O'ahu
carole richelieu	O'ahu	Lori Bishop	O'ahu
Michelle Espinoza	O'ahu	Michael Bishop	O'ahu
Lisa Shandoria Johnson	O'ahu	Jeanne Herbert	O'ahu
Sandy Chen	O'ahu	Karen Valasek	O'ahu
Jane Arnold	O'ahu	Nina Lum	O'ahu
Jessica Parayno	O'ahu	Jess Ivey	Kaua'i
Terrie Wehrli	O'ahu	Ian Valasek	O'ahu
Terri Nakasone	O'ahu	Richard Valasek	O'ahu
Glenna Morrissey	O'ahu	Deborah Miles	O'ahu
Valerie Hashimoto	O'ahu	Ian Valasek	O'ahu
Lillian Rodolfich	O'ahu	Elizabeth Hahn	Kaua'i
Timothy K Blaisdell	O'ahu	Dana Keawe	Hawai'i
Diana Kellum	O'ahu	John Gordines	Kaua'i
Leslie Detor	O'ahu	Ana Kia	O'ahu
Claire Narimasu	O'ahu	Vicky Crowder	O'ahu
Angel Luong	O'ahu	Lee Winter	O'ahu
Kyra Shells	O'ahu	Grace Sherley	O'ahu
Jaclyn Maher	O'ahu	Kyle Phillips Ramsvig	O'ahu
Kathryn Kane	O'ahu	Taylor Ka'ili McKenzie	O'ahu
Berna Rabutan	O'ahu	Cailey G	O'ahu
Linda Estes	Kaua'i	Brynne Burrows	O'ahu

HB-2208-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/24/2026 10:12:40 AM

Testimony for HHS on 3/25/2026 1:40:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Raelyn Reyno Yeomans	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support!

HB-2208-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/24/2026 11:04:28 AM

Testimony for HHS on 3/25/2026 1:40:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Eric Micha'el Leventhal	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Mahalo nui loa for supporting the Farm to Families program! As you may know, approximately one in three households in Hawai'i faces food insecurity, and our most vulnerable populations need our support. This critical bill 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. This program ensures fresh, locally grown produce reaches families facing food insecurity, and helps alleviate hunger in our state.

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 climate 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!

HB-2208-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/24/2026 11:14:08 AM

Testimony for HHS on 3/25/2026 1:40:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jessica Kuzmier	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

HB-2208-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/24/2026 11:36:19 AM

Testimony for HHS on 3/25/2026 1:40:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
maureen smith	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

March 23, 2026

To: Chair Joy San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Angus McKelvey, and the Senate Committee on Health & Human Services

Subject: HB 2208 HD1, Relating to Food Security

Aloha, I am Maureen Smith a farmer & resident of Kilauea, Kaua'i. I'm writing in support of HB2208 HD1. This bill requests that the Department of Human Services (DH provide grant funding for the continuation of the Farms to Families program. These funds will be used by state food banks to purchase, store, and transport fresh, Hawai'i-grown or -produced food to food-insecure communities around the state.

Currently, in Hawai'i, 1 in 3 households are experiencing food insecurity. 34% of Hawai'i's keiki are experiencing hunger. Meanwhile, we're importing 90% of our food from out of state & have seen over 80,000 acres of farmland lost in the last decade. With funds from Farms to Families, the Hawai'i food bank has been able to distribute 10 million pounds of Hawaii grown food. Food banks typically have a large selection of shelf stable products & fresh foods are neglected. Farm to Families help provide the funding and storage for local fresh produce, whose nutrition is incomparable to a product that sat on a barrage or airplane. Farms to Families is a very successful program that reinvests in our local economy, provides a stable market for our farmers, and, most importantly, connects our community with fresh local foods.

I urge the committee to pass HB 2208 HD1 to continue helping feed our communities with fresh, locally grown food, create a stable market space for Hawaii's farmers, and invest in our local economy.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

Maureen Smith

HB-2208-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/24/2026 12:28:19 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/25/2026 1:40:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shay Chan Hodges	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.

Mahalo for your consideration!

HB-2208-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/24/2026 1:34:34 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/25/2026 1:40:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Gustavo De la Pena	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

03/24/2026

Testimony in Support of HB2208 /SB2427, Funding for Farm to Families program under DHS

Aloha, my name is Gustavo de la Pena Valencia. I have been living in Oahu for 21 years, working mostly in programs and projects related to food production, agricultural education and food preparation. I also have been a frequent volunteer in communitary initiatives related with food production in farms, as well as on environmental restoration.

The activities mentioned above have given me over the course of time a better understanding of the vulnerability of the food systems in the State of Hawai'i, and of the severe risks that we all have of losing access to a steady and reliable stream of food in case of destructive natural, political and/or economical events.

The Kona-Low Storm that just occurred last week, reminds us of the higher vulnerability for our lives that represent more frequent, dangerous and unpredictable natural phenomena in the context of global climate change.

So, it is a no-brainer to support actions aimed at strengthening secure access to nutritional food, produced locally; and also to strengthening the capabilities of organizations that already have the infrastructure, logistics and experience for food stockpile and distribution. Bills 2208 and 2427 are a contribution toward the design of better food systems in our State, and I respectfully consider that you should support.

Gustavo de la Pena Valencia

Aina Haina, Honolulu, HI.

LATE

HB-2208-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/24/2026 2:12:57 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/25/2026 1:40:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Naia Blasio	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.

Mahalo for your consideration!

Naia Blasio, 96815



Maui Food Bank
Nourishing Lives. Feeding Futures

LATE

March 25, 2026

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

Aloha Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair McKelvey, 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



HB-2208-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/24/2026 3:21:14 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/25/2026 1:40:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Andrew Ogata	Testifying for Hawai'i Health & Harm Reduction Center	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair McKelvey, 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.

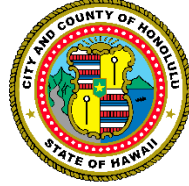
Andrew Ogata
Director of Marketing & Development
Hawai'i Health & Harm Reduction Center

LATE

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

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RICK BLANGIARDI
MAYOR
MEIA



AMY ASSELBAYE
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
PO'O HO'OKO

DEBORAH ZYSMAN
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
HOPE PO'O

March 25, 2026

Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
Senator Angus L.K. McKelvey, Vice Chair
and Members of the Committee on Health and Human Services
Hawaii'i State Senate
415 South Beretania Street, Room 225
Honolulu, HI, 96813

SUBJECT: Support for Senate Bill 2208 HD1 Relating to Food Security

Dear Chair Buenaventura, Vice Chair McKelvey, and Committee Members,

The City's Office of Economic Revitalization (OER) supports Senate Bill 2208 HD1, which pertains to increased funding for the Farm to Families program. The purpose of this bill is to establish appropriated funds for the Hawaii'i Farm to Families Program under the Department of Human Services to alleviate food shortages in the State.

According to the Hawaii'i Foodbank's 2025 Food Insecurity Report, thirty-two percent (32%) of all households in Hawaii'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 important in reducing these food insecurity rates and increasing 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 Hawaii'i farmers and producers.

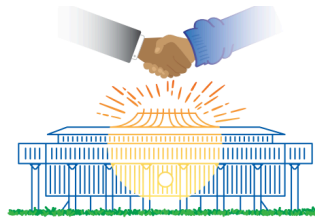
OER's Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems program is focused on increasing local food production. By strengthening our agricultural industry, we not only increase food security—we also honor our responsibility to care for the land, support local farmers and businesses, and create greater access to high-quality, Hawaii'i-made products for residents and visitors. Thank you for this committee's leadership and commitment to a shared vision of a thriving, food-secure Hawaii'i. Should there be any questions, please contact Alex Narrajos, Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems Program Manager, alex.narrajos@honolulu.gov or (808) 768-2287.

Sincerely,

Deborah Zysman

Deborah Zysman
Deputy Director

LATE



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: Senator San Buenaventura, Chair
Senator McKelvey, Vice Chair
Members of the Committee on Health and Human Services

Hearing: 03/25/2026, 1:40pm

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,

We are youth leaders from the Hawai'i Climate Future Forum and the Hawai'i Youth Food Council (HYFC), programs that empower 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**.

One in three households in Hawai'i struggles to consistently put food on the table. Many families are skipping meals or going full days without eating. The communities carrying that burden are often the same ones most exposed to climate impacts - these are not separate problems.

Farm to Families makes a structural investment in both. Funding food banks to source locally grown food reduces dependence on long-distance imports, supports soil health and agrobiodiversity, and builds the kind of food system that holds up under pressure rather than one that can only respond after the fact.

As youth working in climate action and food systems, we see this bill as exactly the kind of policy that works on multiple levels at once: families get fed, and local farmers get a market. This way, Hawai'i's food system can become an asset instead of a liability.

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

LATE



Chair San Buenaventura
Vice Chair McKelvey
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services

Wednesday, March 25th, 2026
1:40 pm

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

Aloha Members of the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services,

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**.

Over one-third of keiki in Hawai'i are growing up in food-insecure homes. In the classroom, this can show up as difficulty concentrating, anxiety, and behavioral challenges. These effects are that can worsen over time and follow youth long into adulthood. When families have to cut fresh produce first to stretch a budget, the resulting harm can be both immediate and long-term.

HB 2208 HD1 addresses these issues directly. Funding food banks to purchase, store, and transport fresh, locally grown food strengthens a safety net that already delivers tens of millions of meals statewide, while putting money back into 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 healthy food reach the families who need it 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 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

LATE

HB-2208-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/24/2026 6:09:20 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/25/2026 1:40:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Elia Herman	Testifying for Hawai'i Food Bank Hui	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

The current disaster response again highlights how critical and fragile our food system is -- displacing families, destroying farms, and threatening the food security of our communities.

Farm to families ensures that money is in there to help build flexible and reliable food systems in blue skies, as well as grey.

LATE

HB-2208-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/24/2026 6:49:25 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/25/2026 1:40:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Faith Butterfield	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support HB2208 HD1! Not only will this bill increase access to fresh food, but it will also help boost the business of local farmers and grant them more financial stability. Furthermore, providing fresh produce to food banks helps destigmatize using them, so families can feel good about providing healthy and balanced meals to their families. During our current time of economic downturn and flood relief efforts, HB2208 HD1 provides a win-win solution.

LATE

HB-2208-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/24/2026 7:08:10 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/25/2026 1:40:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shelby Pikachu Billionaire	Testifying for Kingdom of The Hawaiian Islands & Ohana Unity Party	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

****Aloha kakahiaka nui, Honorable Chair and Members of the Committee.****

My name is ****Master Shelby "Pikachu" Billionaire, HRM****, Kingdom of The Hawaiian Islands, H.I. Chairman, Ohana Unity Party.

I am submitting this testimony in advance via email because the online system has been blocking submissions. Mahalo nui loa to the Clerk’s Office for your guidance. I stand before you today with a heart filled with the Aloha Spirit, in full accordance with ****HRS 5-7.5 Aloha Spirit Law****: “Aloha is the coordination of mind and heart within each person. It brings each person to the self. Each person must think and emote good thoughts and good feelings to others.”

I offer my ****strong and heartfelt support**** for ****HB2208 HD1**** — ***A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO FOOD SECURITY***, which establishes the ****Hawai‘i Farm to Families Program**** and appropriates funds for it. This bill is pure lokahi in action. It creates a smart, direct bridge between our local farmers and the families who need fresh food the most. Food banks will receive grants to purchase, store, and deliver ****100% Hawai‘i-grown or -produced food**** — fruits, vegetables, kalo, breadfruit, eggs, poultry, aquaculture products, and more — ****at no cost**** to food-insecure communities. Here is why this measure is urgently pono: - One in three households in Hawai‘i struggles with food insecurity, and two-thirds face extreme hardship — skipping meals or going without.

Among our keiki, 34% grow up in food-insecure homes, leading to lifelong impacts on learning, behavior, and mental health. Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, Hispanic, and Filipino families are hit hardest (36–47% rates). - In 2025 alone, Hawai‘i’s food banks distributed over ****29 million meals**** while partnering with ****575 local farms and food hubs****, investing more than ****\$13 million**** in Hawai‘i-grown produce — creating nearly ****\$20 million**** in local economic impact through the multiplier effect.

- This program gives our farmers a stable market, keeps dollars circulating right here in Hawai‘i, reduces reliance on expensive imports, and builds true food resilience — especially after disasters like the recent Kona Low storms that destroyed crops and aquaponics systems across the islands. - It is administered by the Department of Human Services with clear safeguards: licensed food banks, anti-discrimination rules, no funds for lobbying or entertainment, annual reporting to the Legislature, and penalties for misuse (including a 5-year ban on future grants).

****He ali‘i ka ‘āina, he kauwā ke kanaka**** — The land is the chief, the people are the servants. HB2208 HD1 lives this sacred teaching by letting our ‘āina feed our own people first. It turns local agriculture into a powerful tool for healing, equity, and aloha ‘āina. In a state where the cost of living is 20–30% above the national average and fresh produce is often out of reach for too many ‘ohana, this program is a practical, compassionate step toward true food security and economic lokahi. I urge you to pass ****HB2208 HD1**** and fully fund the Hawai‘i Farm to Families Program.

Let it become law so our farmers can thrive, our food banks can serve with dignity, and our keiki and kūpuna can eat fresh, local food grown with aloha. ****E ho‘omaika‘i kākou**** — Let us give thanks together for legislation that nourishes both body and spirit while strengthening our lāhui and ‘āina.

Mahalo nui loa for your kuleana and for receiving this testimony.

****Master Shelby "Pikachu" Billionaire, HRM**** Kingdom of The Hawaiian Islands, H.I.
Chairman, Ohana Unity Party

LATE

HB-2208-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/24/2026 8:52:35 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/25/2026 1:40:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
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 Hawai'i 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.

LATE

HB-2208-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/24/2026 10:54:08 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/25/2026 1:40:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
LorrieAnn Santos	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.

Mahalo for your consideration!

Lorrie Ann Santos, Kane'ohe, O'ahu



THE FOOD BASKET

HAWAI'I ISLAND'S FOOD BANK

LATE

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB2208 HD1 – FARM TO FAMILIES

March 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 HB2208 – Farm to Families.

BOARD OF
DIRECTORS

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

ANN EBESUNO
BOARD CHAIR

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

MARK
KRZYZANOWSKI
VICE-CHAIR

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

DENNIS LIN
TREASURER

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

JULIA ZEE
SECRETARY

Why Farm to Families Matters:

STEPHEN UEDA

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

WARREN LEE

SAMANTHA
COLLINS

MAURICE
MESSINA

CASEY HALPERN

JASON COHN



THE FOOD BASKET

HAWAI'I ISLAND'S FOOD BANK

Our Experience on Hawai'i Island:

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

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

Mahalo for your leadership, service, and for your commitment to a thriving, food-secure Hawai'i. The Food Basket respectfully urges your passage of HB2208 HD1.

With deepest aloha,

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

EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR

KRISTIN FROST
ALBRECHT

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DIRECTORS

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