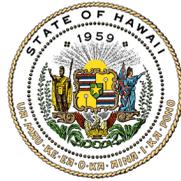


JOSH GREEN, M.D.
Governor

SYLVIA LUKE
Lt. Governor



State of Hawai'i
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE & BIOSECURITY
KA 'OIHANA MAHI'AI A KIA'I MEAOLA
1428 South King Street
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96814-2512
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SHARON HURD
Chairperson
Board of Agriculture & Biosecurity

DEAN M. MATSUKAWA
Deputy to the Chairperson

**TESTIMONY OF SHARON HURD
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE AND BIOSECURITY**

**BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS AND
ENERGY & ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION**

**THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2026
10:15 AM
CONFERENCE ROOM 325**

**HOUSE BILL NO. 2548
RELATING TO SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS**

Chairs Chun and Lowen, Vice Chairs Kusch and Perruso and Members of the Committees:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill No. 2548 that establishes the Climate-Resilient Food Systems Grant Program within the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity and appropriates funds. The Department supports this bill.

A sustainable food system begins with supporting the farmers and ranchers that produce the food. Food producers have challenges at the production and regulatory levels that they know how to overcome but lack the resources to do so. This bill provides access to solutions to scale up or obtain a certification to expand, such as special-purpose equipment, new technology, personnel, training expenses or goods and services that add value to the food they produce in the food system through a grant program. This bill mitigates risk to the farmer, rancher or producer to overcome the specific challenges impacting their operations.

Department support of this measure considers feedback from producers about the high cost of equipment as a major barrier to expanding operations. The Department administered the USDA Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure program (RFSI) that provided \$2.6 million in funding for middle-of-the-supply-chain infrastructure. The Department received 104 applications, 17 of which were funded, leaving 87 proposals unfunded. The USDA will not be offering the RFSI for a second round and these unfunded projects could be considered along with new applications.

Testimony of Sharon Hurd

January 28, 2026

Page 2

The National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) 2022 Census of Agriculture reported that Hawaii has 780+ farms reporting value of sales between \$50,000 - \$499,000 that this bill identifies as the middle-of-the-supply chain with the potential to double food production if provided with the equipment, technology, personnel, training or tool to move to the next level of value of annual sales which is \$500,000+.

Greatly appreciate your support of this bill and thank you for the opportunity to testify in support.



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

February 12, 2026

HEARING BEFORE THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY & ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

TESTIMONY ON HB 2548
RELATING TO SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS

Conference Room 325 & Videoconference
9:00 AM

Aloha Chairs Chun and Lowen, Vice-Chairs Kusch and Perruso, and Members of the Committees:

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 2548, which establishes the Climate-Resilient Food Systems Grant Program within the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity. This program will provide essential resources to help Hawai'i's farmers and ranchers adapt to the increasing challenges posed by climate change while strengthening local food production and food security.

Hawai'i's agricultural sector faces growing threats from climate-related factors, including extreme weather events, prolonged droughts, rising temperatures, and shifting pest and disease patterns. These challenges threaten both short-term crop yields and long-term farm viability. A climate-resilient food systems grant program will allow farmers and ranchers to implement innovative practices and infrastructure improvements that mitigate these risks and ensure the stability of Hawai'i's local food supply.

The intent of the program is to provide grants to agricultural producers for the acquisition of special-purpose equipment and technology, as well as ancillary costs. These funds will help farmers invest in tools and infrastructure that directly improve their ability to respond to climate-related challenges. Special-purpose equipment, such as advanced irrigation systems, soil-monitoring technology, pest- and disease-management tools, and renewable energy systems, can enhance farm efficiency and sustainability.

Agriculture, like all businesses, requires capital investment. The cost of operating a farm or ranch in Hawai'i can be significant. Many of Hawai'i's farmers and ranchers are struggling to secure the financial support necessary to build capacity and invest in climate-resilient infrastructure. A climate-resilient food systems grant program can provide critical support, helping agricultural operations remain viable amid increasing environmental pressures. By ensuring that farmers and ranchers have access to grants for climate-smart investments, the state can support local agriculture while also addressing the broader goal of increasing food security and self-sufficiency.

To maximize the success of this program, we encourage the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity to work closely with local farmers, ranchers, agricultural researchers, and industry stakeholders to develop the grant criteria and funding ranges. This collaboration will ensure that funding is accessible and targeted toward practical solutions that address the real challenges faced by food producers in Hawai'i.

We urge the committee to pass HB 2548 to establish this climate-resilient food systems grant program, which will help protect and strengthen Hawai'i's agricultural industry in the face of climate change.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



To: The House Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems (AGR)
and
The House Committee on Energy and Environmental Protection (EEP)
From: Sherry Pollack, Co-Founder, 350Hawaii.org
Date: Thursday, February 12, 2026, 10:15apm

In strong support of HB2548

Aloha Chairs Chun and Lowen, Vice Chairs Kusch and Perruso, and Committee members,

I am Co-Founder of the Hawaii chapter of 350.org, the largest international organization dedicated to fighting climate change. 350Hawaii.org is in **strong support of HB2548** that would establish the Climate-Resilient Food Systems Grant Program within the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity. These funds will help farmers invest in tools and infrastructure that support climate adaptation and resiliency, and that directly improve their ability to respond to climate-related challenges.

To ensure clarity, accountability, and effective allocation of funds, we encourage the Committees adopt amendments suggested by the Hawaii Farmers Union United in their testimony for the companion measure, SB2097. This includes adding definitions for “climate adaptation” and “resiliency strategies,” and specify qualifying practices.

By investing in local agriculture, we reduce our dependence on imported goods, creating a more resilient and sustainable food system for Hawaii. In doing so, we also avoid the greenhouse gases that would have been emitted from shipping food in, helping in our fight against climate breakdown. Moreover, investing in local agriculture directly stimulates the economy by creating local jobs. These efforts and more are the type of actions needed to move Hawaii to a decarbonized economy.

Supporting local agriculture is crucial for achieving food sustainability and climate resilience. Please pass this important measure.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in **strong support of HB2548**.

Sherry Pollack
Co-Founder, 350Hawaii.org



LATE

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

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

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY & ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Rep. Nicole E. Lowen, Chair
Rep. Amy A. Perruso, Vice Chair

HB2548

RELATING TO SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS

Thursday, February 12, 2026, 10:15 AM
Conference Room 325 & Videoconference

Chairs Chun and Lowen, Vice Chairs Kusch and Perruso, and Members of the Committees,

The Hawaii Cattlemen's Council **supports HB2548** which establishes the Climate-Resilient Food Systems Grant Program within the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity.

We support this measure to support climate adaptation, resiliency, and food system infrastructure through funding to agricultural producers. This concept is similar to the Partnerships for Climate Smart Commodities, a USDA grant that was cancelled in 2025 - the second year of a 5 year contract. While we were not able to finish the program to fully realize the potential of this funding, what we learned is that there is a demonstrated need for this funding to assist producers in purchasing equipment, obtaining technical assistance, and funding practices that help food production and land stewardship.

In our experience, both established ranchers as well as new and small ranchers could benefit from this support. A program like this is strategically proactive, providing the tools needed for our agricultural producers to continue their work for the community and future generations, improving with better practices.

We appreciate the opportunity to testify on this measure. The Hawaii Cattlemen's Council (HCC) is the Statewide umbrella organization comprised of the four county-level Cattlemen's Associations. Ranchers produce a high-quality protein and are the stewards of almost 750 thousand acres of land in Hawaii, or nearly 20% of the State's total land mass. We represent the interests of Hawaii's cattle producers.

Nicole Galase
Hawaii Cattlemen's Council
Managing Director





LATE

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Wai'anae, O'ahu

Rachel LaDrig
Waimanalo, O'ahu

Vincent Kimura
Honolulu, O'ahu

Natalie Urminska
Kauai

Aloha Chairs Chun & Lowen, Vice Chairs Kusch & Perruso, and Committee Members,

The Hawaii's Farmers Union is a 501(c)(5) agricultural advocacy nonprofit representing a network of over 2,500 family farmers and their supporters across the Hawaiian Islands. **HFU supports HB2548.**

The bill's focus on climate adaptation and resiliency aligns with critical needs facing Hawaii's agricultural communities. However, to ensure clarity, accountability, and effective allocation of funds, we recommend including definitions for these terms and a more specific list of eligible practices and technologies. Without such clarity, the implementation may risk funding measures not aligned with regenerative or sustainable outcomes.

Definitions and Eligible Practices: Amend to include definitions for "climate adaptation" and "resiliency strategies," and specify qualifying practices. Proposed amendment to §141-___(d):

"(1) A detailed description of eligible climate adaptation technologies or practices, such as precision agriculture systems, renewable energy sources, and water conservation equipment, for which grant moneys will be expended;"

Support for Technical Assistance and Planning: Expand eligible uses of funds to include essential support services that build project capacity and improve implementation. Suggested addition to §141-___(b):

"(4) Costs associated with planning, technical assistance, or consulting services that support project development, implementation, and evaluation."

Include Monitoring and Reporting: Incorporate provisions for monitoring funded projects and reporting outcomes to assess program impact and facilitate adjustments if necessary. Suggested addition:

(g) The department shall submit an annual report to the legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of each regular session. This report shall include information on the grants awarded, the outcomes of funded projects, and any recommendations to improve the grant program for future cycles.

By addressing these points, HB2548 can better serve Hawaii's agricultural community, fostering a more sustainable and resilient local food system.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.
Hunter Heavilin
Advocacy Director
Hawaii's Farmers Union

LATE

HB-2548

Submitted on: 2/12/2026 3:30:24 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/12/2026 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Angela Young	CARES	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Support.

HB-2548

Submitted on: 2/10/2026 9:29:28 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/12/2026 10:15:00 AM

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

Comments:

Please support this bill. Mahalo.

HB-2548

Submitted on: 2/10/2026 10:56:07 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/12/2026 10:15:00 AM

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

Comments:

Honorable Chairs Chun and Lowen, Vice Chairs Kusch and Perruso, and Members of the Committees,

As a constituent of House District 2, I support the HB 2548 and urge you to pass this measure.

HB-2548

Submitted on: 2/10/2026 6:14:21 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/12/2026 10:15:00 AM

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

Comments:

I, Johnnie-Mae L. Perry Support

2548 HB RELATING TO SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS.

OUTREACH TO EXISTING FARMERS, ESPECIALLY THOSE THAT ARE STRUGGLING?

HB-2548

Submitted on: 2/10/2026 8:13:57 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/12/2026 10:15:00 AM

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

Comments:

STRONG SUPPORT!!!

LATE

HB-2548

Submitted on: 2/11/2026 10:42:20 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/12/2026 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Beth Anderson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this grant program to increase and support climate-resilient food systems. Climate change has required costly innovation and grants like these are absolutely needed to preserve and fund climate resistant food growing infrastructure in our State.

Thank you for considering my viewpoint on HB 2548