

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 HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SYSTEMS
FEBRUARY 11, 2026
9:30 AM
CONFERENCE ROOM 325 & VIDEOCONFERENCE
HOUSE BILL NO. 2595
RELATING TO REGIONAL AGRICULTURE AND FOOD PRODUCTION**

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

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 2595. This bill establishes the Regional Agricultural Feasibility and Food Systems Production Studies Working Group within the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity (Department) to provide coordinated, region-specific agricultural production and crop feasibility analysis across the State. Requires reports to the Legislature and appropriates funds. The Department supports the intent of the bill and offers comments.

The information to be developed by the working group will provide valuable information to agricultural producers and decision-makers across the state and guide region-specific agricultural production. The multi-agency evidence-based planning framework will help ensure that a comprehensive agricultural assessment is used to support food systems plans and agriculture throughout the state.

The complexity and broad scope of work that is to be considered by the working group will require significant amounts of time and expertise to complete. Participation in the group may require full-time dedication from members and significant contributions from other staff with expertise in various disciplines to complete all of the required analyses and assigned tasks. The Department would respectfully request that sufficient resources be provided to ensure the success of the working group in completing this important work.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

‘ŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAII

Legislative Testimony

Hō'ike Mana'o I Mua O Ka 'Aha'ōlelo

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems
Wednesday, February 11, 2026 at 9:30 a.m.

By

Parwinder Grewal, Dean
College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resilience

and

Vassilis Syrmos, PhD
Interim Provost
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

HB 2595 – RELATING TO REGIONAL AGRICULTURE AND FOOD PRODUCTION

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

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony offering comments on HB 2595 which establishes the Regional Feasibility and Food Systems Production Studies Working Group within the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity to provide coordinated, region-specific agricultural production and crop feasibility analysis across the State. Requires reports to the Legislature and appropriates funds until 6/30/2028.

We respectfully offer the following comments. College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resilience (CTAHR) believes that the diversity of climate, soils, farm sizes, and agricultural practices of Hawai'i make it critical to collect local and regional agricultural feasibility and production data. Accurate and up-to-date agricultural information are crucial for all stakeholders to make informed decisions, develop effective policies, and monitor effective programs that will have large and far-reaching impacts. CTAHR conducts agro-ecological analysis, investigates crop suitability; and executes soil health research and assessments, climate and elevation modeling, and production systems research. CTAHR has developed land suitability maps for all islands for 21 crops.

CTAHR can also assist with Controlled Environmental Agriculture (CEA) opportunities. In 2025, the Legislature approved a \$6 million CIP for CTAHR to develop a CEA research and workforce development facility in Mānoa that included the development of a commercial scale prototype that could be useful statewide for research, instruction, farming training, local food production and entrepreneurship, and assist with sourcing local fresh produce to the Department of Education's Regional Kitchen Program. In 2026, CTAHR also received a federal award of \$2 million for CEA applied research.

CTAHR will collaborate as a member of the working group and share its expertise in agriculture and natural resource management and its Centers for Applied Research and Extension Services (CARES) in all counties to address island specific needs. The appropriation in HB 2595 will support statewide community assets.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.



02/09/2026

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

Subject: Testimony in Support of HB2595, relating to agriculture and food production

Aloha,

We are writing in support of **HB2595**, relating to agricultural production. As Hawai'i works to strengthen local food production and reduce reliance on imported food, it is essential that strategic, data-driven planning guides these efforts.

Hawai'i's diverse microclimates vary significantly across islands and regions, directly affecting crop performance and agricultural practices. **HB2595** proposes a thoughtful approach by analyzing regional conditions and crop feasibility to ensure agricultural investments are targeted where they can be most effective. This approach allows the state to maximize outcomes by using data and regional analysis, rather than relying solely on trial and error.

By supporting more informed decision-making, this bill advances a smarter and more resilient path forward for Hawai'i's agricultural sector.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the committee to **pass HB2595**. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Mahalo,

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.



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 11, 2026

HEARING BEFORE THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

TESTIMONY ON HB 2595
RELATING TO REGIONAL AGRICULTURE AND FOOD PRODUCTION

Conference Room 325 & Videoconference
9:30 AM

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

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

The Hawai'i Farm Bureau supports HB 2595, which establishes a regional, data-driven framework to better understand agricultural feasibility and food production capacity across Hawai'i's diverse islands and regions.

HFB appreciates that this measure recognizes the need to move beyond assumptions and toward realistic, region-specific analysis that accounts for profitability, infrastructure, labor availability, and market access. Agricultural production in Hawai'i varies significantly by island, elevation, climate, and available resources, and effective planning must reflect these on-the-ground realities rather than a one-size-fits-all approach.

We also value the bill's emphasis on neighbor island conditions and its intent to align agricultural planning with real-world constraints and opportunities. Ensuring that farmers, ranchers, and agricultural stakeholders are engaged in this process will be critical to producing practical and actionable recommendations.

HB 2595 represents a thoughtful step toward more informed decision-making that can better guide future investments in agriculture, infrastructure, and food systems planning. The Hawai'i Farm Bureau respectfully urges the Committee to support this measure.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Officers

Kaipo Kekona
State President



Christian Zuckerman
Vice-President

Maureen Datta
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Kelii Gannet
Kohala, Hawaii

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Gina Lind
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Mason Scharer
Haleakala, Maui

Kaiea Medeiros
Mauna Kahalawai,
Maui

Kaipo Kekona
Lahaina, Maui

Kilia Avelino-Purdy
Molokai

Negus Manna
Lana'i

India Clark
North Shore, Oahu

Christian Zuckerman
Wai'anae, Oahu

Rachel LaDrig
Waimanalo, Oahu

Vincent Kimura
Honolulu, Oahu

Natalie Urminska
Kauai

Aloha Chair Chun, Vice Chair Kusch, and Members of the House Agriculture & Food Systems 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 supports HB2595.**

HB2595 presents a framework to enhance Hawaii's agricultural planning through regional feasibility studies, addressing the need for localized data to optimize agricultural production and institutional procurement. By establishing a multi-agency working group, the bill aims to deliver comprehensive, region-specific analyses that are crucial for supporting the state's agricultural strategy, food security, and economic resilience.

Hawaii's current food system planning relies on broad assumptions rather than localized data. HB2595 provides the granular, region-specific feasibility data necessary to bridge the gap between small-scale farm capacity and institutional procurement.

Involving representatives from various agencies and the University of Hawaii ensures a multidisciplinary approach, leveraging expertise across agroecology, economics, infrastructure, and policy. Such collaboration is vital to advance the state's capacity to support agriculture by addressing critical gaps in data and planning.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Hunter Heavilin
Advocacy Director
Hawaii Farmers Union

LATE

HB-2595

Submitted on: 2/10/2026 4:32:39 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/11/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alan Takemoto	Bayer	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in support of House Bill 2595 which creates a working group within the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity to study what crops and foods can be grown in different parts of Hawaii, helping farmers understand what will work best in their specific region.

HB2595 ensures that agricultural planning and investments are informed by comprehensive, evidence-based data, strengthening sustainable production, infrastructure readiness, and resilient, regionally tailored food systems across Hawaii.

Thank you.



**Testimony to the House Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems
Representative Cory M. Chun, Chair
Representative Matthias Kusch, Vice Chair**

**Wednesday, February 11, 2026, at 9:30AM
Conference Room 325 & Videoconference**

LATE

RE: HB2595 Relating to Regional Agriculture and Food Production

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

My name is Sherry Menor, President and CEO of the Chamber of Commerce Hawaii ("The Chamber"). The Chamber supports House Bill 2595 (HB2595), which establishes the Regional Agricultural Feasibility and Food Systems Production Studies Working Group within the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity to provide coordinated, region-specific agricultural production and crop feasibility analysis across the State.

HB2595 aligns with our 2030 Blueprint for Hawaii: An Economic Action Plan, specifically under the policy pillar for 21st Century Agriculture. The Chamber recognizes that attractive institutional procurement opportunities are becoming more available for the agriculture industry, such regional kitchens and the state goal for that states that 30% of the foods in public school meals be locally sourced by 2030. By conducting comprehensive feasibility assessments that integrates ecological science, economic modeling, and workforce analysis, the working group will generate actionable recommendations that strengthen food production capacity and guide a sensible process for scaling the agriculture industry.

Achieving institutional procurement goals at this scale requires alignment between production capacity, storage and distribution logistics, processing facilities, and workforce availability. Without region-specific analysis, the State risks setting demand targets that local producers are structurally unable to meet. HB2595 will provide a disciplined framework to evaluate what crops can be grown competitively in each region, what capital investments are required, and how supply can realistically scale to meet institutional demand from schools, hospitals, correctional facilities, and other public purchasers.

For these reasons, the Chamber stands in strong support and respectfully asks to pass House Bill HB2595. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

The Chamber of Commerce Hawaii is the state's leading business advocacy organization, dedicated to improving Hawaii's economy and securing Hawaii's future for growth and opportunity. Our mission is to foster a vibrant economic climate. As such, we support initiatives and policies that align with the 2030 Blueprint for Hawaii that create opportunities to strengthen overall competitiveness, improve the quantity and skills of available workforce, diversify the economy, and build greater local wealth.

HB-2595

Submitted on: 2/9/2026 3:08:04 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/11/2026 9:30:00 AM

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

Comments:

STRONG SUPPORT!!!

LATE

HB-2595

Submitted on: 2/10/2026 5:36:53 PM
Testimony for AGR on 2/11/2026 9:30:00 AM

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

Comments:

Support of a robust agricultural sector in the state of Hawaii is critical to a sustainable economy and improved food security.

The working group will provide Improved data collection and processing using a multi-agency framework that will benefit agricultural producers through out the islands. Please vote for this study.

Thank you,

Sarah Anderson

LATE

HB-2595

Submitted on: 2/10/2026 8:56:00 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/11/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Elizabeth Hansen	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, we need this bill HB 2595!

Mahalo

Elizabeth Hansen, Hakalau HI 96710

LATE

HB-2595

Submitted on: 2/11/2026 7:20:28 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/11/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Edward Johnston	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support these opportunities to help local farm operations. Data driven planning is the future for agriculture.