



‘Ōlelo Hō‘ike ‘Aha Kau Kānāwai

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 24 / HOUSE  
RESOLUTION 23**

REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AND  
TOURISM TO CONDUCT A STUDY ON HAWAII'S FOOD MANUFACTURING  
STRENGTHS AND STRATEGIC MARKETS

Ke Kōmike Hale o ka ‘Oihana Mahi‘ai a me ka ‘Ōnaehana Mea‘ai  
(House Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems)

Ke Kapikala o Hawai‘i  
(Hawai‘i State Capitol)

‘Apelila 8, 2026

10:00AM

Lumi 325

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

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) **SUPPORTS HCR24/HR23**, which requests  
the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism (DBEDT) to conduct  
a study on Hawai‘i’s food manufacturing strengths and strategic markets.

Agriculture is foundational to Hawai‘i’s economic resilience, food security, and  
cultural perpetuation. To strengthen Native Hawaiian economic wellbeing, OHA has  
committed to advancing pathways that expand new markets for Native Hawaiian  
products.<sup>1</sup> Supporting food production, product manufacturing, and new marketing can  
provide families with business opportunities and a livable wage, while stewarding our  
‘āina.

OHA supports the integration of this study’s findings into curriculum at  
innovation centers and workforce development and business incubation programs.  
Aligning curriculum and training with real market opportunities will better prepare local  
agricultural entrepreneurs to succeed. OHA encourages these updated curriculums and  
programs to incorporate sustainable practices and remain grounded in Hawai‘i’s cultural  
values that distinguish Hawai‘i-made products in the global market. OHA’s own Mahi‘ai

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<sup>1</sup> See OHA Strategic Plan available at: <https://www.oha.org/about/mana-to-mauli-ola/>

Development program balances entrepreneurship with ‘ike kūpuna.<sup>2</sup> What makes Hawai‘i’s agricultural products unique is their connection to ‘āina and ‘ike kūpuna.

Additionally, OHA emphasizes the importance of ensuring that Native Hawaiian businesses and communities are included. This includes equitable access to shared-use facilities, technical assistance, financing opportunities, and participation in emerging high-value markets. Intentional inclusion will help close longstanding economic disparities and ensure that the benefits of this study are broadly shared.

For the reasons stated above, OHA respectfully urges this committee to **PASS HCR24/HR23.**

Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify on this critical issue.

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<sup>2</sup> See OHA and Go Farm Hawai‘i’s Cultivate Canoe Crops Course at: <https://www.oha.org/news/oha-and-gofarm-hawaii-launch-cultivating-canoe-crops-course-on-hawaii-island/>



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**Gary Okimoto**, Safeway, *Advisor*  
**Maile Miyashiro**, C&S Wholesale, *Immediate Past Chair*

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

DATE: April 8, 2026  
TIME: 10am

RE: HCR24 HR23 REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AND TOURISM TO CONDUCT A STUDY ON HAWAII'S FOOD MANUFACTURING STRENGTHS AND STRATEGIC MARKETS.

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. Increasing local food manufacturing creates economic diversification, improves resilience and sustainability, and can help our state become more food secure. Understanding the current state of food manufacturing and taking Hawaii's strengths and strategic market will provide valuable data that the state and industry can use to grow local food manufacturing. As noted in the measure Hawaii has high operational costs, including energy, labor, and imported ingredients, and logistical or transportation barriers that may prevent entry into identified strategic markets. Getting clear data on these challenges is an important step to move us towards more local food manufacturing economic growth.



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April 8, 2026

HEARING BEFORE THE  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

**TESTIMONY ON HCR 24 & HR 23**  
REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT,  
AND TOURISM TO CONDUCT A STUDY ON HAWAII'S FOOD MANUFACTURING  
STRENGTHS AND STRATEGIC MARKETS

Conference Room 325 & Videoconference  
10:00 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 HCR 24 & HR 23**, which requests the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism to conduct a study on Hawai'i's food manufacturing strengths and strategic markets.

Value-added agriculture and food manufacturing are important components of Hawai'i's agricultural economy. Expanding opportunities to process, package, and market locally grown products can help increase farm revenues, reduce waste, and create new business opportunities for producers across the State. The State's investment in the Food and Product Innovation Network reflects this growing focus on strengthening the value-added sector.

HFB agrees that better understanding Hawai'i's competitive advantages, cost structures, and potential market opportunities will help guide future investments and policy decisions. Identifying strategic markets and aligning workforce development, infrastructure, and business support programs can improve the success of local food entrepreneurs and manufacturers.

At the same time, HFB respectfully notes that value-added manufacturing depends on a strong and viable agricultural production base. Ensuring that local farmers and ranchers are included in these discussions will be important so that efforts to grow food manufacturing remain connected to Hawai'i's agricultural capacity and supply.

We also encourage that the study consider the full range of agricultural products in Hawai'i, including both value-added and fresh products, and recognize the importance of supporting production agriculture alongside manufacturing and export strategies.

HFB appreciates the collaborative approach outlined in this measure, including coordination with the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity, Agribusiness Development Corporation, and the University of Hawai'i. Continued alignment across these entities will be key to building a cohesive and effective food system.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.



Jesse Jong  
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BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

**LATE**

**HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 24**

REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AND TOURISM TO CONDUCT A STUDY  
ON HAWAII'S FOOD MANUFACTURING STRENGTHS AND STRATEGIC MARKETS

**April 8, 2026**

**10:00 a.m.**

**Conference Room 325 & Videoconference**

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

I am writing in **strong support** of HCR24, which requests that the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism (DBEDT) conduct a study on Hawai'i's food manufacturing strengths and strategic markets. I submit this testimony both in my individual capacity and on behalf of Jong Enterprise, a Hawai'i-based management consulting firm specializing in food and agriculture systems.

Jong Enterprise provides services to food ecosystem organizations across Hawai'i, including producers, cooperatives, nonprofits, and public-sector entities. In 2026, we published the *Hawai'i Food Industry Report*, based on a survey conducted on 145 local businesses examining the structural challenges and opportunities facing Hawai'i's food sector. The findings of that report strongly reinforce the need for the study that HCR24 proposes.

Our survey data and stakeholder engagement consistently reveal a central problem: Hawai'i's food system is structurally fragmented. Producers, manufacturers, distributors, and support organizations operate largely in silos, without the coordinated market intelligence or shared infrastructure needed to compete effectively in high-value markets. This leads to suppressed revenue growth for local manufacturers and limits job creation within the industry. HCR24 directly addresses this gap by requesting a data-driven analysis of where Hawai'i's food manufacturing sector holds genuine competitive advantage—and where strategic investment can yield the highest economic return.

By directing the DBEDT to design a study in collaboration with the Agribusiness Development Corporation (ADC), the University of Hawai'i, and the Department of Health (DOH), it ensures that the analysis combines economic, agricultural, research, and public health perspectives for a thorough assessment that can accurately identify the competitive advantages, infrastructure gaps, and high-impact investment opportunities within Hawai'i's food manufacturing sector.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to pass HCR24.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony.

**HCR-24**

Submitted on: 4/3/2026 11:36:00 PM

Testimony for AGR on 4/8/2026 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

I, Johnnie-Mae L. Perry, Support

24 HCR REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AND TOURISM TO CONDUCT A STUDY ON HAWAII'S FOOD MANUFACTURING STRENGTHS AND STRATEGIC MARKETS.