



OFFICE OF HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

‘Ōlelo Hō‘ike ‘Aha Kau Kānāwai

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 94 / HOUSE
RESOLUTION 86 HD1**

URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
AND BIOSECURITY TO JOINTLY DEVELOP A FARMER-TO-INSTITUTION
COORDINATION PLAN THAT IS ALIGNED WITH THE AINA KITCHEN NETWORK
ROLLOUT

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

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 HCR94/HR86 HD1**, which
urges the Department of Education (DOE) and the Department of Agriculture and
Biosecurity to develop a farmer-to-institution coordination plan aligned with the AINA
Kitchen Network rollout.

Food is a vital connection to ‘āina, culture, and community wellbeing. For Native
Hawaiians, farming is not only an economic activity but stewardship of ‘āina, and
community wellbeing. Strengthening pathways that connect local producers to reliable
markets is essential to advancing Native Hawaiian economic self-sufficiency.

Expanding local food procurement in schools strengthens this connection for our
keiki, supports our local farmers, and contributes to improved health and economic
outcomes. Development of a coordinated Farmer-to-Institution Plan aligned with the
AINA Kitchen Network fills a critical gap in Hawai‘i’s food system; many local farmers
lack the infrastructure to scale production to meet that demand of large public
institutions like our schools. Without intentional coordination and investment, this gap

will persist, limiting both food system resilience and economic opportunities for local producers.

The interagency approach this resolution calls for identifies needed products, assesses production gaps, and supports farmer capacity-building that makes it possible for farmers to have capacity to supply our schools and the DOE to meet its 2030 goal of 30% locally sourced school meal ingredients. Institutional markets such as the DOE represent a powerful opportunity to generate stable, livable income while expanding stewardship of ‘āina, and community wellbeing.

For the reasons stated above, OHA respectfully urges this committee to **PASS HCR94/HR86 HD1.**

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



LATE *Testimony submitted late may not be considered by the Committee for decision making purposes.

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
KA 'OIHANA HO'ONA'AUAO
P.O. BOX 2360
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96804

LATE

Date: 04/08/2026

Time: 10:00 AM

Location: 325 VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

Committee: AGR

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Keith T. Hayashi, Superintendent of Education

Title of Bill: HCR94, URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND BIOSECURITY TO JOINTLY DEVELOP A FARMER-TO-INSTITUTION COORDINATION PLAN THAT IS ALIGNED WITH THE AINA KITCHEN NETWORK ROLLOUT.

Purpose of Bill: Urging The Department Of Education And Department Of Agriculture And Biosecurity To Jointly Develop A Farmer-to-institution Coordination Plan That Is Aligned With The Aina Kitchen Network Rollout.

Department's Position:

We appreciate the support from the Legislature in helping the Hawaii State Department (Department) meet the 30 percent target by 2030.

Meeting the 2030 local purchasing goal and acting in response to the audit findings is a Department priority as reiterated in the upcoming memo from the Superintendent to Principals, Cafe Managers, and School Food Services staff.

The Department is part of a collective of State agencies currently working to establish a Memorandum of Understanding between the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity, the Agribusiness Development Corporation, the Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism, the Department of Health, the Department of the Attorney General, the Hawaii Farm Bureau, and the Department to support the nutrition of Hawaii's keiki. The workgroup is collaborating on aligning the supply and demand to meet the 2030 goal.

The School Food Services Branch has already started or completed working on all the recommendations in the audit. For example, over the 2026-27 school year, the Department is rolling out K-12 food service software that will replace handwritten records, after just completing the procurement process that began over a year ago. The resolution points out that both Departments are understaffed. Funding and FTE would be needed in order to create another plan.

While we appreciate the support from the Legislature that this resolution signals, the Department is well underway with partnerships and plans to meet the State's goals and

respond to the recent audit.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this resolution.



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April 8, 2026

HEARING BEFORE THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

TESTIMONY ON HCR 94, HD1 & HR 86, HD1
URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND DEPARTMENT OF
AGRICULTURE AND BIOSECURITY TO JOINTLY DEVELOP A FARMER-TO-
INSTITUTION COORDINATION PLAN THAT IS ALIGNED WITH THE AINA KITCHEN
NETWORK ROLLOUT

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 94, HD1 and HR 86, HD1, which urges the Department of Education and the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity to jointly develop a farmer-to-institution coordination plan aligned with the rollout of the AINA Kitchen Network.

Hawai'i has set an ambitious goal to source thirty percent of school meal ingredients locally by 2030, yet current procurement remains significantly below that target. As noted in the resolution, the Department of Education achieved only approximately 5.4 percent local procurement in the 2023–2024 school year, highlighting the gap that still needs to be addressed.

HFB agrees that increasing local food procurement requires more than procurement policy changes alone. Farmers need clear market signals, long-term contract certainty, and coordinated support to scale production to meet institutional demand. Without a coordinated approach, it will be difficult for local producers to align planting, harvesting, and investment decisions with the needs of large-scale institutional buyers such as the Department of Education.

HFB also recognizes that there are ongoing efforts, such as the Nourishing Hawai'i Future initiative, that are already working to strengthen connections between local producers and

institutional markets. We view these efforts as complementary and believe they can help inform and support the development of the coordination plan envisioned in this resolution. Aligning and building upon existing initiatives will be important to avoid duplication and maximize impact.

We strongly support the development of a coordinated plan that identifies specific product needs, assesses production capacity, and outlines a strategy to build farmer capacity over time. The inclusion of multi-year procurement structures is particularly important, as farmers require predictability to make investments in land, labor, and infrastructure.

We also support efforts to improve data tracking and transparency in local food procurement. A centralized system to accurately track locally sourced products and spending will help ensure accountability and better inform future policy decisions.

As this effort moves forward, HFB encourages continued coordination with the agricultural community to ensure that the plan is practical, achievable, and reflective of on-the-ground conditions. Aligning production capacity with the phased rollout of the AINA Kitchen Network will be critical to the long-term success of this initiative.

HFB appreciates being included as a stakeholder in this process and looks forward to working with the Department of Education, Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity, and other partners to strengthen Hawai'i's local food system.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.



HAWAII APPLESEED
CENTER FOR LAW & ECONOMIC JUSTICE

Support for HR 86/HCR 94 – Urging Departments to Jointly Develop a Farmer-To-Institution Coordination Plan Aligned with the ‘Aina Kitchen Network Rollout

House Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems

Wednesday, April 8, 2026, 10:00AM

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

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in **support of HR 86/HCR 94**, which urges the Hawai‘i Department of Education (HIDOE) and Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity (DAB) to jointly develop a “*Farmer-to-Institution Coordination Plan*” to guide the rollout of the state’s much anticipated regional kitchen initiative.

Hawai‘i Appleseed has long been a supporter of the HIDOE’s school meals program, understanding that school meals are a critical service for both children who are hungry as well as for parents and caregivers, many of whom are struggling to afford enough groceries to feed their families. We also have been staunch supporters of any initiatives that strengthen our local food system by ensuring that these programs utilize locally grown products to the greatest degree possible.

The regional kitchen model holds great promise, but advocates and the public have seen little in the way of a plan for how these kitchens will operate. This was corroborated by the recent Audit of the HIDOE’s farm to school efforts.¹ The audit also found that the Department has not been using allocated federal funding intended for the purchase of locally grown produce, and lacks an adequate plan to achieve its benchmark farm to school goals.

This audit brings to light serious concerns about the viability of the regional kitchen initiative. At a time when nearly one in three households in Hawai‘i is experiencing food insecurity, the need for coordinated, strategic action has never been more urgent. With the first kitchen in Wahiawa anticipated to be operational and serving meals by Fall 2027, it is critical that the state has a detailed plan to ensure there are no interruptions to procurement, preparations, or compliance that may ultimately result in food shortages for students. A Farmer-to-Institution Coordination Plan—as described in this resolution—would help bring together farmers, agencies, and the appropriate stakeholders now to facilitate better outcomes for both students and farmers than we’ve seen so far.

Building a resilient, local food system is an act of economic justice. It supports our working farmers, protects our environment, and feeds our future. We cannot afford to reach 2030 and realize we missed our targets due to a lack of inter-agency communication.

We respectfully urge the Legislature to adopt this resolution, making a bold statement about the importance of ensuring that food security is treated as a fundamental priority for our state.

¹ Office of the Auditor, State of Hawai‘i, *Audit of the Department of Education’s Efforts to Meet Its Mandate to Incorporate Local Foods in School Meals*, [Report No. 26-08](#) (March 2026).

HCR-94-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/3/2026 11:34:04 PM

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

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

Comments:

I, Johnnie-Mae L. Perry, Support

94 HCR URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND BIOSECURITY TO JOINTLY DEVELOP A FARMER-TO-INSTITUTION COORDINATION PLAN THAT IS ALIGNED WITH THE AINA KITCHEN NETWORK ROLLOUT.

HCR-94-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/6/2026 11:05:47 AM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Christine L. Andrews, J.D.	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chairs, Vice Chairs, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Christine Andrews and I write to you from Wailuku, Maui to respectfully request your support of this measure to develop a farmer-to-institution coordination plan aligned with the Aina Kitchen Network Rollout. Our farmers contribute to food security, our local economies, and our resiliency as communities. Especially after the devastating impacts of the kona low storms on our agricultural communities, our farmers need our support more than ever.

Mahalo nui for supporting farmers and our food security,

Christine Andrews, JD

Wailuku, Maui