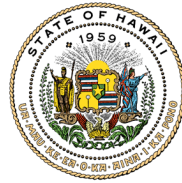


**JOSH GREEN, M.D.**  
Governor

**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**

**BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS**

**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 25, 2026**

**9:30 AM**

**CONFERENCE ROOM 325 AND VIDEOCONFERENCE**

**HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 144 / HR 136  
REQUESTING CERTAIN STATE AND COUNTY AGENCIES, IN COORDINATION  
WITH COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS, TO DEVELOP A COMPREHENSIVE  
STATEWIDE FOOD SECURITY STRATEGY.**

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

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on HCR 144 / HR 136 that requests certain state and county agencies, in coordination with community-based organizations, develop a comprehensive food security strategy.

The Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity (Department) supports this resolution. The resulting comprehensive food security strategy should include milestones and a timeline to meet the six data-driven, equity-focused items listed to be the work of the agencies, organizations, leaders, coalitions, and stakeholders as they develop a comprehensive statewide food security strategy.

This resolution represents another step to move Hawaii towards food security.

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

JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE  
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR



SIERRA WHITESIDE  
CHAIRPERSON

DAINTRY BARTOLDUS  
EXECUTIVE ADMINISTRATOR

STATE OF HAWAII  
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAII  
STATE COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES  
'A'UNIKE MOKU'ĀPUNI NO KA NĀ KĀWAI KULA  
PRINCESS VICTORIA KAMĀMALU BUILDING  
1010 RICHARDS STREET, Room 122  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813  
TELEPHONE: (808) 586-8100 FAX: (808) 586-7543

March 25, 2026

The Honorable Representative Cory M. Chun, Chair  
House Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems  
The Thirty-Third Legislature  
State Capitol  
State of Hawai'i  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear Chair Chun and Committee Members:

**SUBJECT: HCR144/HR136 – Requesting Certain State and County Agencies, in Coordination with Community-Based Organizations, to Develop a Comprehensive Statewide Food Security Strategy**

The Hawai'i State Council on Developmental Disabilities offers its **SUPPORT WITH COMMENTS** for HCR144/HR136, which requests the development of a comprehensive, statewide food security strategy.

Food security is foundational to health, independence, and community living. Individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD), aging caregivers, and households with access and functional needs (AFN) often face compounded barriers to consistent, nutritious food, including transportation limitations, physical access challenges, communication barriers, and increased reliance on caregivers or support systems.

The Council appreciates that this measure takes a data-driven, equity-focused, and cross-agency approach, recognizing the importance of culturally relevant, community-based solutions and coordination across state and county systems. This framework is critical to addressing the complex and interconnected nature of food insecurity in Hawai'i.

To strengthen this measure, the Council respectfully recommends:

- Explicitly including individuals with disabilities and access and functional needs (AFN) in the strategy, as these populations experience unique and often overlooked barriers to food access;
- Ensuring alignment with existing programs that serve these populations, including SNAP, Medicaid home and community-based services, and aging network supports, to reduce fragmentation and improve access;

- Supporting community-driven solutions that promote independence, dignity, and long-term stability for individuals and families.

This measure aligns with Hawai'i's broader efforts to strengthen nutrition security, reduce administrative barriers, and bridge aging and disability systems. With the inclusion of disability and access needs, this strategy can serve as a strong foundation for equitable, resilient, and sustainable food systems across our state.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony **in support offering comments** for **HCR144/HR136**.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Daintry Bartoldus". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Daintry Bartoldus  
Executive Administrator

JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE  
LT. GOVERNOR



WENDY GADY  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

STATE OF HAWAII  
**AGRIBUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION**  
HUI HO'OULU AINA MAHIAI

TESTIMONY OF WENDY L. GADY  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
AGRIBUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS  
March 25, 2026  
9:30 a.m.  
Conference Room 325 & Videoconference

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 144  
REQUESTING CERTAIN STATE AND COUNTY AGENCIES, IN COORDINATION  
WITH COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS, TO DEVELOP A COMPREHENSIVE  
STATEWIDE FOOD SECURITY STRATEGY

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

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of House Concurrent Resolution 144, requesting certain state and county agencies, in coordination with community-based organizations, to develop a comprehensive statewide food security strategy aligned with the Agribusiness Development Corporation's statutory mission.

Hawai'i continues to face significant challenges related to food security, including heavy reliance on imports, vulnerability to supply chain disruptions, and limited local production capacity. A coordinated, statewide food security strategy is essential to address these challenges in a comprehensive and sustained manner.

The Agribusiness Development Corporation's statutory mandate includes facilitating the development of agricultural infrastructure, supporting diversified agriculture, and promoting increased local food production. Aligning a statewide

HOUSE CONCURENT RESOLUTION 144  
REQUESTING CERTAIN STATE AND COUNTY AGENCIES, IN COORDINATION WITH  
COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS, TO DEVELOP A COMPREHENSIVE STATEWIDE  
FOOD SECURITY STRATEGY

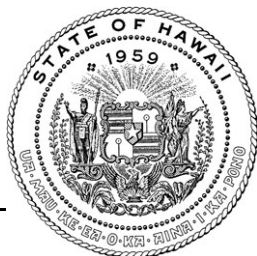
Page 2 of 2

food security strategy with this mandate provides an opportunity to strengthen coordination across agencies, improve efficiency of investments, and better support agricultural producers.

A comprehensive approach should consider infrastructure development, water and land access, workforce development, value-added production, and market expansion. Integrating these elements into a unified strategy will help ensure that public investments are targeted, measurable, and effective in increasing local food production and resilience.

Establishing a statewide framework also supports long-term planning, enhances accountability, and provides clear benchmarks for progress toward Hawai'i's food security goals.

For these reasons, support is respectfully offered for the development of a comprehensive statewide food security strategy aligned with the Agribusiness Development Corporation's statutory responsibilities. This testimony may be further amended or refined following review by the Agribusiness Development Corporation Board at its March 31 meeting.



**DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS,  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM**  
KA 'OIHANA HO'OMOHALA PĀ'OIHANA, 'IMI WAIWAI  
A HO'OMĀKA'IKA'I

JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE  
LT. GOVERNOR

JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA  
DIRECTOR

DANE K. WICKER  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

No. 1 Capitol District Building, 250 South Hotel Street, 5th Floor, Honolulu, Hawaii 96813  
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 2359, Honolulu, Hawaii 96804  
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Telephone: (808) 586-2355  
Fax: (808) 586-2377

Statement of  
**James Kunane Tokioka**  
**Director**  
Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism  
before the  
**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS**

Wednesday, March 25, 2026  
9:30 AM  
State Capitol, Conference Room 325

In consideration of  
**HCR 144 / HR136**  
**REQUESTING CERTAIN STATE AND COUNTY AGENCIES, IN COORDINATION  
WITH COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS, TO DEVELOP A COMPREHENSIVE  
STATEWIDE FOOD SECURITY STRATEGY.**

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

The Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT) offers **comments** on HCR144 / HR136 to strengthen the statewide food security strategy.

Hawai'i's food security challenge is not only a social issue, but fundamentally an economic development issue. As noted in HCR144 / HR136, approximately thirty-two percent of households experience food insecurity, with disproportionate impacts on vulnerable communities. Addressing this challenge requires a shift from isolated programmatic responses to a systems-based economic strategy.

DBEDT's strategic framework, Redesigning Hawai'i's Economy for Resilience, recognizes food security as a core pillar of economic diversification. The State's ability to increase local food production, stabilize costs, and build resilience is directly tied to its ability to develop, acquire, and invest in enabling infrastructure, facilities, and land. A comprehensive statewide food security strategy should explicitly recognize that:

**1. Infrastructure, facilities, and land are foundational economic inputs**

- a. Food production cannot scale without irrigation systems, aggregation hubs, processing facilities, cold storage, and access to agricultural lands. These are public goods that require coordinated state investment and, where appropriate, acquisition to ensure long-term control and resilience.

**2. Food security depends on viable market pathways for producers**

- a. Farmers and ranchers must have multiple, reliable outlets for their products. This includes:
  - i. Value-added manufacturers and processing facilities;
  - ii. Institutional buyers such as the Department of Education, healthcare systems, and correctional facilities; and
  - iii. Private sector markets including retail, hospitality, and export channels.

Without these pathways, increased production will not translate into economic viability or improved food access.

**3. The food system must be treated as an integrated ecosystem**

- a. Production, processing, distribution, and consumption must be aligned. Investments in one segment without the others will not achieve the desired outcomes of affordability, accessibility, and resilience.

DBEDT further emphasizes that the statewide strategy must be aligned with and advance existing statutory mandates, including:

- Act 151 – Doubling local food production;
- Act 175 – Integration of local foods into school meal systems; and
- Act 176 – Strengthening local procurement and food system resilience.

These mandates collectively establish a clear policy direction, Hawai'i must increase local production while simultaneously building the infrastructure and institutional demand necessary to sustain it. The statewide strategy requested in this resolution should serve as the coordinating framework to operationalize these laws.

Finally, DBEDT recommends that the strategy prioritize:

- Identification of priority infrastructure and facility investments statewide;
- Coordination of land access and irrigation systems to support production;
- Expansion of value-added and processing capacity through networks such as the Food and Product Innovation Network (FPIN);
- Alignment of institutional procurement (e.g., DOE under Act 175) with local supply through commodity mapping; and
- Clear performance metrics tied to production, cost reduction, and food access outcomes.

DBEDT Testimony  
HCR144 / HR136  
March 25, 2026  
Page 3 of 3

A successful statewide food security strategy must move beyond planning and into implementation through capital investment, asset acquisition, and coordinated execution across agencies.

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



**LATE**

#### HIPHI Board

May Okihiro, MD, MS  
Chair  
John A. Burns School of Medicine,  
Department of Pediatrics

Jennifer José Lo, MD  
Vice Chair  
Hawai'i Health Partners

Titimaea Ta'ase, JD  
Secretary  
Taase Law Office

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Kaiser Permanente

Tammy Ho  
The Queen's Medical Center

Carissa Holley, MEd  
Hale Makua Health Services

Joyce Lee-Ibarra, MS  
JLI Consulting

Misty Pacheco, DrPH  
University of Hawai'i at Hilo

Dina Shek, JD  
Medical-Legal Partnership  
For Children in Hawai'i

JoAnn Tsark, MPH  
John A. Burns School of Medicine, Native  
Hawaiian Research Office

Danette Wong Tomiyasu, MBA  
Retired, Hawai'i State Department of  
Health

#### HIPHI Initiatives

Coalition for a  
Tobacco-Free Hawai'i

Community-Based Research &  
Evaluation

Community Health  
Worker Initiatives

Environmental Health

Hawai'i Climate Change and Health  
Working Group

Hawai'i Drug & Alcohol-Free Coalitions

Hawai'i Immunization Coalition

Hawai'i Oral Health Coalition

Hawai'i Public Health Training Hui

Healthy Eating + Active Living

Kūpuna Collective/Healthy Aging &  
Community Living

Public Health Workforce Development

Date: March 24, 2026

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

Re: Support for HCR 144 Requesting Coordination to Develop a Statewide  
Food Security Strategy

Hrg: March 25, 2026, 9:30 AM, Conference Room 325

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Hawai'i Public Health Institute (HIPHI)<sup>1</sup> and the Healthy Eating + Active Living<sup>2</sup> (HEAL) Statewide Coalition are in strong support of HCR 144, which calls for the development of a comprehensive, statewide food security strategy.

Food insecurity is a critical and ongoing public health issue in Hawai'i, driven by high living costs, geographic isolation, and systemic inequities. According to the Hawai'i Foodbank's 2024–2025 report, approximately 32% of Hawai'i households, nearly 1 in 3, experience food insecurity, meaning they lack consistent access to enough food for an active, healthy life.<sup>3</sup> This aligns with findings from the University of Hawai'i Economic Research Organization (UHERO), which estimates that around 30% of adults in Hawai'i experience low or very low food security.<sup>4</sup>

Access to affordable, nutritious food is foundational to preventing chronic diseases such as obesity, diabetes, and heart disease, conditions that continue to burden Hawai'i's healthcare system and communities. Food

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<sup>1</sup> Hawai'i Public Health Institute's mission is to advance health and wellness for the people and islands of Hawai'i. We do this through expanding our understanding of what creates health of people and place, fostering partnerships, and cultivating programs to improve policies, systems, and the environments where people live, learn, work, age, and play.

<sup>2</sup> The Healthy Eating + Active Living (HEAL) Coalition, formerly known as the Obesity Prevention Task Force, was created by the legislature in 2012 and is comprised of over 60 statewide organizations. The HEAL Coalition works to make recommendations to reshape Hawai'i's school, work, community, and health care environments, making healthier lifestyles obtainable for all Hawai'i residents.

<sup>3</sup> The State of Food Insecurity in Hawai'i - Hawai'i Food Bank.

[https://hawaiiifoodbank.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/HawaiiFoodbank\\_TheStateOfFoodInsecurityInHawaii\\_2023.pdf](https://hawaiiifoodbank.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/HawaiiFoodbank_TheStateOfFoodInsecurityInHawaii_2023.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Hawai'i's Health and Wellbeing Journey Over Time — Monitoring Equity and Access-UHER.

<https://uhero.hawaii.edu/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/HawaiisHealthAndWellbeingJourneyOverTime.pdf?v=1747793741>



insecurity is directly linked to poorer health outcomes, increased healthcare costs, and reduced quality of life. Food insecurity also places a significant economic burden on the state, estimated to result in approximately \$850 million annually in additional healthcare costs.<sup>5</sup>

HCR 144 represents an important step toward a coordinated, equity-centered approach to strengthening Hawai'i's food systems. By bringing together state and county agencies alongside community-based organizations, this resolution supports cross-sector collaboration to:

- Increase local food production and distribution
- Improve access to healthy, culturally appropriate foods
- Strengthen emergency food preparedness and resilience
- Address longstanding disparities in food access

Importantly, this effort aligns with ongoing statewide initiatives to double local food production and build a more self-sufficient, sustainable food system. A unified strategy will help ensure resources are used efficiently and that solutions are community-informed and data-driven.

Investing in food security is an upstream, preventive approach that advances health equity, supports local economies, and enhances Hawai'i's resilience to climate change and future crises.

For these reasons, HIPHI and the HEAL Coalition respectfully urge the Committee to adopt HCR 144.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lauren Loor".

Lauren Loor  
Healthy Eating + Active Living Statewide Program Manager

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<sup>5</sup> The State of Food Insecurity in Hawai'i - Hawai'i Food Bank.  
[https://hawaiifoodbank.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/HawaiiFoodbank\\_TheStateOfFoodInsecurityInHawaii\\_2023.pdf](https://hawaiifoodbank.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/HawaiiFoodbank_TheStateOfFoodInsecurityInHawaii_2023.pdf)

**HR-136**

Submitted on: 3/24/2026 12:17:40 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/25/2026 9:30:00 AM



Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ryan Emmons	Waiakea Inc	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair Chun and Committee Members:

My name is Ryan Emmons, President of Waiakea Inc., the operating company for Waiakea Hawaiian Volcanic Water, testifying in strong support of HCR144/136 Requesting Certain State and County Agencies in Coordination with Community-Based Organizations, to Develop a Comprehensive Statewide Food Security Strategy.

Food Security is very important for our island community, and is a top priority for our company. Given the recent storms, it has become more apparent to us that we need to find a way to help our communities with making sure that we can provide safe and timely delivery of food. We have provided and coordinated all water distribution for disaster relief over the last several years with the Red Cross, and we believe that we can assist the State with this goal and offer our services to help with a working group, as this concurrent resolution calls for.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.



PO Box 4, Kunia, Hawaii, 96759 || 808-622-9026 || [www.agstewardshiphawaii.org](http://www.agstewardshiphawaii.org)

March 23, 2026

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and Members of the Committee on Agriculture & Environment,

**Re: Testimony in Support of HCR 136 Comprehensive Statewide Food Security Strategy**

On behalf of Agriculture Stewardship Hawai'i, we submit this testimony **in strong support of** HR136/HCR 144/SCR41, which requests state and county agencies, in coordination with community-based organizations, to develop a comprehensive Statewide Food Security Strategy.

Agriculture Stewardship Hawai'i is a non-profit organization committed to improving the viability and sustainability of Hawai'i's agricultural producers and food system through technical assistance, resource coordination, stewardship-based business education, and policy work. Agriculture Stewardship Hawai'i leads the [Statewide Food Systems Coordination Initiative \(HSFSC\)](#), launched in 2024 with philanthropic and gubernatorial support. HSFSC works to align agricultural stakeholders, address infrastructure barriers, secure federal resources, advance institutional procurement of local food, and support policy priorities that strengthen Hawai'i's food system.

There are **currently no statewide goals on addressing food insecurity or hunger in spite of our food insecurity crisis affecting one in three households**. This measure highlights the need for a comprehensive, data- and equity-informed approach to advancing solutions to eliminating hunger and supporting access to nutritious, culturally relevant food. The statewide food security strategy also aligns state efforts with existing county plans for a more coordinated and effective statewide response.

Mahalo nui for your time and consideration,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Amanda Shaw".

Dr. Amanda Shaw, PhD, Statewide Food Systems Coordinator

Email: [amanda@agstewardshiphawaii.org](mailto:amanda@agstewardshiphawaii.org),

Tel: 808 429 5310



**HAWAII APPLESEED**  
CENTER FOR LAW & ECONOMIC JUSTICE

**LATE**

Testimony of the Hawai‘i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice  
Support for HCR 144 – Requesting the State and County Agencies to Develop a Comprehensive  
Statewide Food Security Strategy  
House Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems  
Wednesday, March 25, 2026, 9:30AM

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Dear Chair Kahaloa, Vice Chair Kusch, and members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of HCR 144, which requests the State and County Agencies, in coordination with community-based organizations, to develop a comprehensive Statewide Food Security Strategy.

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. Data from the Hawai‘i Foodbank’s most recent report paints a stark picture: families are skipping meals, keiki are going without adequate nutrition, and entire communities—particularly Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, and Filipino households—are bearing a disproportionate burden.

Addressing this challenge requires more than isolated programs or short-term fixes. It demands a coordinated, equity-driven, and forward-looking strategy, and involves the work of many stakeholders, including emergency food providers, state and county agencies, farmers, food retailers, consumers, and community groups.

A comprehensive statewide food security strategy can help Hawai‘i better understand and address the root causes of food insecurity, strengthen local food systems, and ensure that all residents—regardless of where they live or who they are—have access to affordable, nutritious, and culturally appropriate food. It also presents an opportunity to identify “win-win” solutions that both reduce food insecurity and support local agriculture, increasing resilience in the face of economic and climate-related disruptions.

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.



**LATE**

**WRITTEN TESTIMONY ONLY**

March 24, 2026

Representative. Cory M. Chun, Chair  
Representative. Matthias Kusch, Chair  
House Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems

**RE: HCR 144/HR 136**  
**Hearing date: March 25, 2026, 9:30 a.m.**

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

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on behalf of Young Brothers, LLC, offering **STRONG SUPPORT** for HCR144/136.

We support the creation of a working group that together will try to find solutions to address the vital issue of food security in our islands.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.”

Sincerely,

Kris Nakagawa  
Vice President, External and Legal Affairs

**LATE**

**HR-136**

Submitted on: 3/24/2026 5:08:15 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/25/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Brian Miyamoto	Hawaii Farm Bureau	Support	In Person

Comments:

Farm Strong!



Date: March 25, 2026

Subject: Support of HCR144 Requesting Certain State and County Agencies, in Coordination with Community-Based Organizations, to Develop a Comprehensive Statewide Food Security Strategy

Aloha Chair Chun, Vice Chair Kusch, and members of the committee,

On behalf of Hawai'i Foodbank, I express our support for HCR 144, Requesting Certain State and County Agencies, in Coordination with Community-Based Organizations, to Develop a Comprehensive Statewide Food Security Strategy.

Food insecurity is a growing crisis in Hawai'i, with one in three households, including 100,000 keiki, struggling to access adequate, healthy food. One in five households have individuals who are skipping meals or going whole days without eating on a regular basis.

For over 40 years, Hawai'i Foodbank has provided daily and emergency assistance to those facing food insecurity in Hawai'i, distributing food to families and individuals on O'ahu and Kaua'i through direct service programs as well as through our network of 266 agency partners and pantries. Last year, we served an average of over 160,000 people each month, distributing more than 22 million pounds of nutritious food, including more than 7.1 million pounds of fresh produce.

With substantial cuts to federal support programs, the increasing frequency of federal government shutdowns, and severe weather events like the recent Kona Low storms, now, more than ever, we must come together to develop a comprehensive strategy to ensure that no one in Hawai'i goes hungry.

Thank you for your consideration of this important measure.

With aloha,

Amy Miller  
President and CEO, Hawai'i Foodbank

**HR-136**

Submitted on: 3/21/2026 8:24:14 AM

Testimony for AGR on 3/25/2026 9:30:00 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

144 HCR REQUESTING CERTAIN STATE AND COUNTY AGENCIES, IN COORDINATION WITH COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS, TO DEVELOP A COMPREHENSIVE STATEWIDE FOOD SECURITY STRATEGY.

**HR-136**

Submitted on: 3/24/2026 8:45:12 AM

Testimony for AGR on 3/25/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kim Wassel Hardy	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Hawai‘i is facing a daily crisis of hunger and food insecurity—one that is often invisible, but deeply felt across our islands. The truth is, we are all food insecure because we rely on an import-dependent system that is increasingly vulnerable to disruption.

We’ve seen this clearly in the past weeks with the catastrophic flooding. When crisis hits, it is not large systems that respond first—it is our neighbors. It is community members, cultural practitioners, and grassroots leaders who step up immediately, share what they have, and ensure that no one is left behind. These individuals and organizations are not peripheral to food security—they are its backbone.

If we are going to end hunger in Hawai‘i, we must expand how we define it. Food security is not just about measuring how much food is produced or distributed. It is about investing in the social infrastructure that ensures food actually reaches people in ways that are accessible, dignified, and resilient—through trusted relationships, local networks, and culturally grounded practices.

Hunger in Hawai‘i is not caused by a lack of food. Our islands are abundant. The issue is access, equity, and coordination. When we frame food as a right—not a commodity—we open the door to cross-sector solutions that go beyond agriculture or charity alone.

This measure is an opportunity to align state and county agencies with the people who are already doing this work on the ground and design solutions that are responsive, adaptive and effective. We can build a resilient, community-driven path toward zero hunger together.

I respectfully urge your support.

Mahalo for your time and leadership on this important matter.