



OFFICE OF HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

‘Ōlelo Hō‘ike ‘Aha Kau Kānāwai

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 2320 SD1 HD1**  
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Ke Kōmike Hale o ka ‘Oihana ‘Imi Kālā  
(House Committee on Finance)  
Ke Kapikala o Hawai‘i  
(Hawai‘i State Capitol)

‘Apelila 8, 2026

2:00AM

Lumi 308

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Aloha e Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the House Committee on Finance:

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) **SUPPORTS SB2320 SD1 HD1**, which establishes the Kuleana AgTech Pathways Program in the University of Hawai‘i system to strengthen Hawai‘i’s agricultural workforce through culturally grounded, island-based career pathways that begin in high school and continue into post-secondary education and employment.

The provisions of SB2320 SD1 HD1 are consistent with OHA’s prior work recognizing that cultivating new farmers requires sustained, mentored pathways rather than short-term exposure. The Taro Security and Purity Task Force’s 2010 report, prepared with community input statewide and supported by OHA, emphasized that “a taro farmer is not created in a single semester or class,” and encouraged linked classroom and field opportunities that allows learners to carry credits across programs and build a full track of study.<sup>1</sup> The Task Force further recommended expanding agricultural and cultural apprenticeships and mentorships that place learners with experienced farmers for meaningful durations, noting that short-term apprenticeships can be inefficient for farmers because of the time and attention required to train participants.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Taro Security and Purity Task Force, *E ola ho uke kalo; ho ‘i hou ka ‘āiba lē‘ia: 2010 Legislative Report* (Dec. 29, 2009), at 62.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.* nd n.101

This measure's dual-credit structure to allow early access to resources by high school students, internship/apprenticeship opportunities, and high school career and technical education components directly align with these recommendations and provide a framework to normalize long-term mentorship and practice-based learning within public education systems. The Task Force Report also called for developing a pipeline of youth education programs, scholarships, internships, and apprenticeships to "grow" new farmers within local communities, and for establishing career or study tracks in Hawaiian agriculture within the university system.<sup>3</sup> This measure advances that infrastructure by starting early, reducing barriers, and connecting students to real farm settings and credentialed pathways.

For the reasons stated above, OHA respectfully urges this committee to **PASS SB2320 SD1 HD1**.

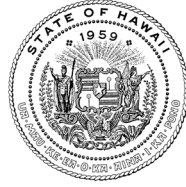
Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify on this critical issue.

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<sup>3</sup> Taro Security and Purity Task Force, *2010 Legislative Report*, at 48.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE  
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR



JADE T. BUTAY  
DIRECTOR

WILLIAM G. KUNSTMAN  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

STATE OF HAWAII  
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS  
KA 'OIHANA PONO LIMAHANA

April 8, 2026

To: The Honorable Chris Todd, Chair  
The Honorable Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair and  
Members of the House Committee on Finance

Date: Wednesday, April 8, 2026  
Time: 2:00 p.m.  
Place: Conference Room 308, State Capitol

From: Jade T. Butay, Director  
Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (DLIR)

**Re: S.B. 2320 SD1 HD1 RELATING TO AGRICULTURE**

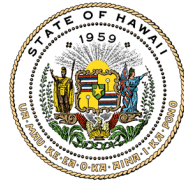
The **DLIR supports** this measure provided it does not conflict with the priorities identified in the Governor's Executive Supplemental Budget request. DLIR will defer to the University of Hawaii (UH) as the lead agency on internal implementation matters and bill language should the measure continue through the legislative process.

The Department notes growing student interest in agricultural careers and hopes this measure will provide the catalyst to expand agricultural science and technology education at both the college and high school levels.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this important matter.

**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 FINANCE**

**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 8, 2026  
2:00 PM  
CONFERENCE ROOM 308 & VIDEOCONFERENCE**

**SENATE BILL NO. 2320, SD1, HD1  
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE**

Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testify on Senate Bill No. 2320, SD1, HD1, relating to agriculture. This measure establishes the Kuleana AgTech Pathways Pilot Program to create career pipelines in the fields of agriculture and agricultural technology; requires the University of Hawaii to collaborate with the Department of Education, Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity (Department), Agribusiness Development Corporation, Department of Labor and Industrial Relations, and appropriate community organizations to develop and administer the program; requires reports to the Legislature; appropriates funds; and is effective 7/1/3000. The Department supports this measure.

The Department believes that any measure that creates clear pathways into careers in agriculture and agriculture technology are critical to ensuring food security and biosecurity for the State.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



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

**Date:** 04/08/2026

**Time:** 02:00 PM

**Location:** 308 VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

**Committee:** FIN

**Department:** Education

**Person Testifying:** Keith T. Hayashi, Superintendent of Education

**Title of Bill:** SB2320, HD1, RELATING TO AGRICULTURE.

**Purpose of Bill:** Establishes the Kuleana AgTech Pathways Program to create career pipelines in the fields of agriculture and agricultural technology. Requires the University of Hawaii to collaborate with the Department of Education, Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity, Agribusiness Development Corporation, Department of Labor and Industrial Relations, and appropriate community organizations to develop and administer the program. Requires reports to the Legislature. Appropriates funds. Effective 7/1/3000. (HD1)

#### **Department's Position:**

The Hawai'i State Department of Education (Department) offers comments on SB 2320, SD 1, HD 1, which establishes a Kuleana Agtech Pathways Program designed to cultivate a skilled, culturally grounded, and resilient agricultural workforce for Hawai'i.

The Department recognizes the need to strengthen the pipeline to the agriculture workforce to support Hawai'i's goal to be self-sustaining and understands the value of integrating Native Hawaiian agriculture, regenerative practices, aquaculture, agroforestry, and entrepreneurship to foster a workforce that is both technically proficient and deeply connected to Hawai'i's culture. The Department remains committed to working with the University of Hawai'i (UH); the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity; the Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism and its Agribusiness Development Corporation; the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations; and community stakeholder groups to design work-based learning opportunities in authentic workplace settings and to ensure the curriculum and instruction delivered in the Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources career pathway is aligned with current and emerging industry standards and practices.

The components of the Kuleana Agtech Pathways Program provided in Section 2(c) aligns with the Department's efforts to prepare students for the current and future agriculture workforce, including instruction in agricultural technology (agtech), professional development for educators, and student internship opportunities. Partnering with UH to offer high school students dual credit courses and certificate programs in agriculture and agtech and to establish agtech regional hubs to provide students with hands-on, community-based educational activities will advance student learning and promote the desired pipeline to workforce.

The Department defers to the University of Hawai'i regarding the establishment and implementation of the Kuleana Agtech Pathways Program outlined in Section 2.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure and for your continued support in the Department's workforce development efforts.



# 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 Finance  
Wednesday, April 8, 2026 at 2:00 p.m.

By

Parwinder Grewal, Dean  
College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resilience  
and  
Vassilis Syrmos, PhD  
Interim Provost  
University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa

#### SB 2320 SD1 HD1 – RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on SB 2320 SD1 HD1 relating to Agriculture which establishes the Kuleana AgTech Pathways Program to create career pipelines in the fields of agriculture and agricultural technology. Requires the University of Hawai‘i (UH) to collaborate with the Department of Education (DOE), Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity (DAB), Agribusiness Development Corporation (ADC), Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (DLIR), and appropriate community organizations to develop and administer the program. Require reports to the Legislature and appropriate funds.

In 2024, University of Hawai‘i College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resilience (CTAHR) leadership and faculty engaged in college-wide strategic planning to advance Hawai‘i’s agriculture, build local self-sufficiency, boosting selective exports of value-added products, preparing the agricultural workforce, improving ecosystem health, and promoting community prosperity and wellbeing. One of the priority focus areas for CTAHR was workforce development to attract new generations to agriculture through innovative education, training, and support programs that create a formal pipeline that connects Hawai‘i’s high school and community college students to CTAHR and ultimately to the local agricultural workforce. CTAHR has collaborated with DOE about its efforts involving early college credits through the CTAHR Summer Research Institute and specific introductory courses such as Introduction to Natural Resources and Environment (NREM 192) and Agriculture, Environment and Society (TPSS 200). A recent focus with workforce readiness is CTAHR’s 3-year degree which will involve learning by doing through practical, hands-on-training and creating experiential learning opportunities connecting students with producers at its Waimānalo, Kapa‘a, Kula, Waimea, and Kona CARES centers as regional hubs in every county. CTAHR is also collaborating with DOE on professional development for educators and to create online micro credentials to keep Ag-educators updated on new technologies; and developing

programs for farm managers and agricultural professions. CTAHR has the instructional expertise in GIS and remote sensing, drone operations and other AI technology, and agricultural engineering for best management practices and reduction of costs of production.

CTAHR supports the State's food security and economic diversification goals and is committed to its continuous collaboration with DOE, DAB, ADC, DLIR, UH School of Hawaiian Knowledge and other community organizations with assisting students and agricultural entrepreneurs learn, thrive, and be culturally informed. The appropriation in SB 2320 SD1 HD1 will support statewide community assets.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.



# MAUI

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

VOICE OF BUSINESS

**HEARING BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE  
HAWAII STATE CAPITOL, HOUSE CONFERENCE ROOM 308  
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 8, 2026 AT 2:00 P.M.**

To The Honorable Representative Chris Todd, Chair  
The Honorable Representative Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair  
Members of the Committee on Finance

## **SUPPORT SB2320 SD1 HD1 RELATING TO AGRICULTURE**

The Maui Chamber of Commerce supports SB 2320 SD1 HD1, which establishes the Kuleana AgTech Pathways Program within the University of Hawai'i to expand agricultural science and technology career pathways across the State.

A strong and sustainable agricultural sector is critical to Maui County's and the State of Hawaii's economic diversification, food security, and resilience. Like many industries across our islands, agriculture faces persistent workforce shortages and an aging farmer population. Creating clear, accessible pathways for students to pursue careers in agriculture and ag technology is essential to strengthening this sector for the long term.

We support efforts to better align education with workforce needs by enhancing coordination between K–12 schools, the University of Hawai'i system, and industry partners. Programs that provide hands-on learning, internships, dual-credit opportunities, and exposure to modern agricultural technologies will help prepare students for the realities of today's agricultural economy while positioning agriculture as a viable, innovative, and rewarding career path.

We recognize the value of establishing regional hubs, which can ensure that training and opportunities are accessible to students across the islands, including rural and underserved communities. This approach supports equitable participation and helps cultivate a new generation of local agricultural leaders who are rooted in Hawai'i's unique environmental and cultural context.

Mahalo for the opportunity to share our support of this bill.

Sincerely,

Pamela Tumpap  
President

To advance and promote a healthy economic environment for business, advocating for a responsive government and quality education, while preserving Maui's unique community characteristics.



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

April 8, 2026

HEARING BEFORE THE  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

**TESTIMONY ON SB 2320, SD1, HD1**  
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Conference Room 308 & Videoconference  
2:00 PM

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice-Chair Takenouchi, 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 SB 2320, SD1, HD1**, which establishes the Kuleana AgTech Pathways Program within the University of Hawai'i to expand agricultural science and technology career pathways across the State.

Hawai'i's agricultural industry faces ongoing workforce shortages and an aging farmer population. Developing clear and structured pathways for students to enter agricultural careers is essential to ensuring the long-term viability of local food production and biosecurity efforts. Strengthening coordination between public schools, the University of Hawai'i system, and industry partners will help build a skilled workforce prepared for the evolving needs of modern agriculture.

Agriculture today requires knowledge of technology, resource management, business planning, and environmental stewardship. Providing students with hands-on training, internship opportunities, dual-credit pathways, and exposure to emerging agricultural technologies will better align education with real-world workforce demands. Programs that integrate classroom learning with practical farm experience help students see agriculture as a viable and innovative career choice.

HFB supports efforts that create statewide consistency while allowing regional flexibility to address the unique agricultural characteristics of each island. Partnerships between educators, producers, and industry stakeholders will be critical to ensure that training programs reflect actual workforce needs.

SB 2320, SD1, HD1 represents a positive investment in the next generation of farmers, ranchers, agricultural technicians, and biosecurity professionals. Building a strong agricultural workforce pipeline strengthens Hawai'i's food security and economic resilience.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of this measure.



April 7, 2026

To: Chair Chris Todd, Vice Chair Jenna Takenouchi, and Members of the House Committee on Finance

Subject: SB2320 SD1 – Relating to Agriculture

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Carlin Rose McFadden, and I serve as a Lead Advocate in Civic Engagement with Hawai'i Food+ Policy at Purple Mai'a Foundation. I am also the author of the Kuleana AgTech Pathways Program reflected in SB2320. I respectfully offer my strong support for SB2320 SD1.

This measure responds to a real and urgent need in Hawai'i. The State's food system depends on cultivating a skilled, culturally grounded, and resilient agricultural workforce, yet too many young people still do not see a clear pathway into agriculture. At the same time, agriculture today increasingly depends on technology, data, climate adaptation, and coordinated workforce development. SB2320 SD1 recognizes that reality and offers a practical, forward-looking solution.

KAPP was born from direct classroom and community experience. While teaching Geographic Information Systems to Hawai'i youth through place-based, community-grounded learning, students began to understand agriculture differently. They were mapping food access, land use, water systems, and climate risks in their own communities. They were not simply learning software. They were seeing possibilities. Many were introduced for the first time to careers in geospatial analysis, drone operations, agricultural data systems, climate-smart farming, and food systems planning. Agriculture shifted from being perceived narrowly as labor to being recognized as science, technology, entrepreneurship, and stewardship. That shift is exactly what Hawai'i's workforce needs.

While programs like this exist across Hawai'i, they often remain siloed. Agriculture, education, and technology are too often taught and implemented separately, without clear pathways connecting students to real opportunities. Students may be exposed to agriculture in one setting, technology in another, and career pathways in yet another, but rarely are these experiences intentionally linked.

SB2320 SD1 addresses this gap directly. It expands agriculture into technology and builds those connections intentionally. The program creates coordinated pathways that link classrooms to real farms, real data, and real careers. It ensures that students are not only learning skills, but also building relationships with farmers, organizations, and employers across the agricultural sector.

The bill establishes the Kuleana AgTech Pathways Program within the University of Hawai'i system and requires collaboration with the Department of Education, Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity,

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**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.



Agribusiness Development Corporation, Department of Labor and Industrial Relations, and community partners. It supports educator and career coordinator positions, establishes internships and apprenticeships, creates dual-credit opportunities, and provides training in climate-smart farming, GIS, drone operations, and entrepreneurship. It also creates regional hubs in each county and a tiered certification system to guide students from exposure to employment.

These provisions are significant because they move beyond isolated programs and toward real infrastructure. Hawai'i does not need more disconnected efforts. It needs coordinated systems that build clear, supported pathways into the workforce.

From a fiscal perspective, this investment is both strategic and necessary. Hawai'i continues to rely heavily on imported food, while also facing challenges in retaining a local agricultural workforce. Without intentional investment in workforce infrastructure, the State will continue to lose young talent and remain dependent on external systems. Programs like KAPP help keep that workforce here in Hawai'i by creating visible, credible, and supported career pathways.

The appropriations in this measure are essential. Without funding for coordination, staffing, training, and implementation, these connections cannot happen at scale. This is not just funding a program, it is building the infrastructure needed to revitalize Hawai'i's agricultural sector, strengthen local production, and support long-term economic resilience.

SB2320 is a win for students because it expands access to meaningful, place-based career opportunities. It is a win for farmers because it builds stronger workforce pipelines and partnerships. It is a win for the State because it helps retain talent, strengthen food security, and invest in a more resilient local economy.

Mahalo for your time and consideration. I respectfully urge the Committee to pass SB2320 SD1.

Respectfully,

Carlin Rose McFadden & the Food+Policy Team | #fixourfoodsystem

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**SB-2320-HD-1**

Submitted on: 4/6/2026 3:24:08 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/8/2026 2:00:00 PM

<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

2320 SB RELATING TO AGRICULTURE.

**SB-2320-HD-1**

Submitted on: 4/6/2026 5:14:08 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/8/2026 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Glen Kagamida	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

STRONG SUPPORT!!! MAHALO!

April 6, 2026

To: Chair Chris Todd, Vice Chair Jenna Takenouchi, and the House Committee on Finance

Subject: **SB2320 SD1 HD1**, Relating to Agriculture

Aloha,

My name is Sydney Haas and I am a farmer in Hale'iwa. **I am writing in support of SB2320 SD1 HD1**, which establishes the Kuleana AgTech Pathways Program that will create career pipelines in agriculture and agriculture tech. Not only could this bill help provide career opportunities in these fields, but it can also help create means to revitalize Hawai'i's agriculture economy.

Between 2017 and 2022, the number of farms in Hawai'i declined by over 10%, and the average farmer age now exceeds 60. The reduction in the number of farms is troubling as Hawai'i remains dependent on imports to feed our communities, and therefore is also vulnerable to disruptions in the supply chain when faced with economic or environmental disasters. Without effective and organized pathways for younger generations to enter agriculture, we risk continued weakening of local agricultural production and food system resiliency.

**SB2320 SD1 HD1** addresses this challenge by:

- Expanding agricultural science and technology into high school and UH Career and Technical Education programs.
- Training students in high-demand skills such as GIS, drone operations, climate-smart farming, and agricultural data systems.
- Creating internships, apprenticeships, and dual-credit opportunities with local farms and businesses.
- Establishing regional AgTech hubs aligned with each county's needs.

**I urge the committee to pass SB2320 SD1 HD1** to establish the Kuleana AgTech Pathways Program. This program bridges cultural stewardship with modern agricultural tools, preparing the next generation to care for the 'āina while strengthening Hawai'i's food security and workforce resilience. The model would provide an opportunity to perpetuate, and transform, traditional Hawaiian agricultural knowledge across generations while prioritizing the needs of both 'āina and community.

Mahalo to the committees for the opportunity to testify,

Sydney Haas