



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

**Date:** 02/18/2026

**Time:** 04:15 PM

**Location:** CR 224 & Videoconference

**Committee:** EDU/AEN

**Department:** Education

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

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

**Purpose of Bill:** 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, 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.

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

The Hawai'i State Department of Education (Department) offers comments on SB 2320, 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.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE  
LT. GOVERNOR



WENDY GADY  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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

TESTIMONY OF WENDY L. GADY  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
AGRIBUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEES ON  
EDUCATION & AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT  
February 18, 2026  
4:15 p.m.  
Conference Room 224 & Videoconference

SENATE BILL NO. 2320  
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Chairpersons Kim and Gabbard, Vice Chairs Kidani and Richards, and Members of the Committees:

The Agribusiness Development Corporation (ADC) **supports** S.B. 2320, which establishes the **Kuleana AgTech Pathways Program** to create clear, supported career pipelines in agriculture and agricultural technology, and directs the University of Hawai'i to collaborate with the Department of Education, Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity, ADC, the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations, and community partners to develop and administer the program, with annual reporting to the Legislature.

Hawai'i's ability to increase food production, strengthen climate resilience, and modernize agriculture depends on building a workforce pipeline that is visible, attainable, and aligned with real jobs—ranging from production agriculture and equipment operations to data-enabled irrigation, controlled environment agriculture, food processing, and ag-focused entrepreneurship. S.B. 2320 is well structured because it is collaborative by design and emphasizes

supported pathways and credentialing—features consistently associated with durable workforce outcomes in other states.

Two comparable models demonstrate what sustained, structured pathways can produce:

**Connecticut’s Agricultural Science and Technology Education (ASTE) model**—tracked through a required five-year graduate follow-up—shows strong workforce and postsecondary outcomes. In the Class of 2019 follow-up report submitted to the Connecticut State Board of Education, **97% of graduates were employed**, with **32% working full-time in an agriculture-related field**, and **11% serving in the armed forces**. The same report found **91% obtained a postsecondary certificate**, **60% earned a four-year degree**, and **10% of graduates owned a business**, collectively employing **38 individuals**. The report also quantified hands-on, work-based learning impacts through Supervised Agricultural Experience projects, including student-generated income and documented community service and economic activity.

**California’s AgTech Alliance** provides a relevant example of a statewide, hub-based approach to aligning innovation, workforce development, and industry needs. The Alliance operates a statewide network of **nine regional innovation hubs**, supported by major public investment, to accelerate technology adoption while building training pathways for students, farmworkers, and career changers. Its structure emphasizes field testing, startup support, and direct industry engagement to translate research into real-world farm applications. The California AgTech Alliance has placed 1500+ workers in long-term AgTech careers using robotics, drones and precision ag, attracted \$50M in private investment, and launched 200+ startups.

Hawai’i is well positioned to apply these lessons in a way that reflects local priorities: strengthening local food production, expanding ag-related career opportunities for residents statewide, improving farm viability through appropriate technology adoption, and supporting community resilience through a more modern and connected agricultural economy. S.B. 2320’s multi-agency design

reflects the same elements that have produced results elsewhere: structured pathways, defined institutional roles, and accountability through annual reporting.

ADC also supports the bill's emphasis on coordination and collaboration and commits to working with partner agencies and the University of Hawai'i to help shape course curriculum that directly serves the needs of Hawai'i's agribusiness and AgTech sectors. This includes ensuring that training aligns with actual industry practices in land management, irrigation systems, food manufacturing, logistics, and applied agricultural technology.

Equally important, ADC supports building meaningful, paid internships and registered apprenticeship opportunities that connect students with farms, food manufacturers, and AgTech employers across the State. These work-based learning opportunities are critical to keeping Hawai'i students in Hawai'i by providing clear pathways to local careers, reducing the need to leave the State for employment, and strengthening the agricultural workforce that is essential to meeting Hawai'i's food production and resilience goals.

For these reasons, ADC supports S.B. 2320 and appreciates the Legislature's leadership in establishing a program that can build durable, locally rooted pathways into agriculture and AgTech careers for Hawai'i's future.

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

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

**SYLVIA LUKE**  
Lt. Governor



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  
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**SHARON HURD**  
Chairperson  
Board of Agriculture & Biosecurity

**DEAN M. MATSUKAWA**  
Deputy to the Chairperson

**TESTIMONY OF SHARON HURD  
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE AND BIOSECURITY**

**BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEES ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT  
AND EDUCATION**

**WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 2026  
4:15 PM  
CONFERENCE ROOM 224 & VIDEOCONFERENCE**

**SENATE BILL NO. 2320  
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE**

Chairs Gabbard and Kim, Vice Chairs Richards and Kidani, and Members of the Committees:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testify on Senate Bill No. 2320, 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; and appropriates funds. 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.



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)

February 18, 2026

HEARING BEFORE THE  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

**TESTIMONY ON SB 2320**  
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Conference Room 224 & Videoconference  
4:15 PM

Aloha Chairs Kim and Gabbard, Vice-Chairs Kidani and Richards, and Members of the Committees:

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**, 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 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.

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

February 18, 2026

To: The Honorable Donna Mercado Kim, Chair,  
The Honorable Michelle N. Kidani, Vice Chair, and  
Members of the Senate Committee on Education

The Honorable Mike Gabbard, Chair  
The Honorable Herbert M. "Tim" Richards, III, Vice Chair and  
Members of the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment

Date: Wednesday, February 18, 2026  
Time: 4:15pm  
Place: Conference Room 224, State Capitol

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

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

The **DLIR supports the intent** of 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 there exists an increasing student interest in agricultural careers and the hope is that this measure will provide the catalyst to expand agricultural science and technology education at the college level and in our high schools.

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





Date, 2026

To: Chair McKelvey, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Members of the Committees,

Subject: **SB 2320**

Aloha,

I am writing in strong support of SB 2320, which seeks to establish the Kuleana AgTech Pathways Pilot Program within the University of Hawai'i system. This measure represents a meaningful investment in the future of Hawai'i's agricultural workforce by building intentional pathways for education, training, and careers in agriculture and agricultural technology.

Hawai'i's agricultural sector faces multiple challenges: an aging farmer population, labor shortages, economic pressures on small and medium producers, and the need to integrate emerging technologies that improve productivity and sustainability. SB 2320 offers a proactive solution by: Creating structured opportunities for students to gain agricultural experience through internships, apprenticeships, and hands-on learning, supporting dual-credit and certification programs that connect secondary education with workforce credentials, establishing regional AgTech hubs that serve as centers for collaboration, training, and community engagement across all counties, and encouraging partnerships between the University of Hawai'i, Department of Education, Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity, Department of Labor and Industrial Relations, and local agribusinesses.

By investing in workforce development and coordination across agencies, this bill strengthens Hawai'i's capacity to retain young people in agriculture, equips them with skills aligned to 21st-century agricultural needs, and supports economic opportunities in both traditional and tech-driven segments of the food system. Agriculture in Hawai'i is more than production, it is culture, community, and resilience. Equipping the next generation with the education, certification, and real-world experience to succeed in agribusiness and agro-innovation is essential to sustaining our land and communities. I respectfully urge the Committees to schedule a hearing for SB 2320 and advance this bill for further consideration. Thank you for your leadership and consideration of this testimony.

Mahalo,

Carlin McFadden & the Food+Policy Team

#fixourfoodsystem

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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.

**SB-2320**

Submitted on: 2/12/2026 11:13:41 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/18/2026 4:15:00 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**

Submitted on: 2/13/2026 3:31:08 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/18/2026 4:15:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Emma Waters	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Writing in strong support of this innovation program to help teach our next generation of farmers. Without local farmers, there is no local food. Mahalo.

**SB-2320**

Submitted on: 2/15/2026 9:18:41 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/18/2026 4:15:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
M. Leilani DeMello	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I KĀKO‘O this bill and hope that not only will the career pathway be created for our workforce, but also that those who successfully complete this agricultural program will be hired for any jobs that Hawaii has BEFORE seeking applicants from elsewhere. Our youth and young adults should have priority for these opportunities so that they can choose to live their lives in their homeland and work in a field that provides the means to do so.

Mahalo,

M. Leilani DeMello

‘Ōla‘a, Puna, Hawai‘i

**SB-2320**

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 8:27:54 AM

Testimony for EDU on 2/18/2026 4:15:00 PM

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

Comments:

SUPPORT

**Committee on Education & Agriculture (EDU/AEN)**

RE: Support for SB2320 – Kuleana AgTech Pathways Program

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

My name is [Your Name], and I am a [parent/student/farmer/educator/community member] from [Island/Community]. I am writing in strong support of SB2320, which establishes the Kuleana AgTech Pathways Program.

Hawai'i's agricultural workforce is aging, and many farms are struggling to scale. Between 2017 and 2022, the number of farms in Hawai'i declined by over 10%, and the average farmer age now exceeds 60. At the same time, Hawai'i imports the majority of its food. Without clear pathways for youth to enter agriculture, we risk continued contraction of our local food system.

SB2320 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

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.

I respectfully urge the Committee to support SB2320.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

[Your Organization, if applicable]

[Your Contact Information]

**Committee on Education & Agriculture (EDU/AEN)**  
**RE: Support for SB2320 – Kuleana AgTech Pathways Program**

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

My name is Mia Nishiguchi, and I am a senior at Kalani High School. I am writing in **strong support of SB2320**, which establishes the **Kuleana AgTech Pathways Program**.

Hawai‘i’s agricultural workforce is aging, and many farms are struggling to scale. Between 2017 and 2022, the number of farms in Hawai‘i declined by more than 10%, and the average age of farmers now exceeds 60. At the same time, Hawai‘i imports the majority of its food. Without clear pathways for youth to enter agriculture, we risk continued contraction of our local food system.

SB2320 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

As a public high school student preparing for college and a future career, I see firsthand how limited structured pathways are for students interested in agriculture, sustainability, or AgTech who do not know where to begin.

In school, many of us learn about climate change, food insecurity, and sustainability in theory. However, we rarely have opportunities to engage directly in hands-on agricultural innovation or see farming as a viable, high-tech, and respected career path. Programs like SB2320 would help students connect classroom learning in science, technology, engineering, and math to real-world applications that directly impact our communities.

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. I respectfully urge the Committee to **support SB2320**.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Sincerely,

**Mia Nishiguchi**  
**Kalani High School**

**SB-2320**

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 8:27:50 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/18/2026 4:15:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jan K Baldado	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I SUPPORT SB 2320.

Mahalo nui.

February 16, 2026

To: Chairs Donna Mercado Kim, Mike Gabbard; and Vice Chairs Michelle Kidani, Tim Richards III; and the Senate Committees on Education, and Agriculture and Environment

Subject: **SB2320**, Relating to Agriculture

Aloha,

My name is Sydney Haas and I am a farmer in Hale'iwa. **I am writing in support of SB2320**, which establishes the Kuleana AgTech Pathways Pilot Program that will create career pipelines in agriculture and agriculture tech. The program would require collaboration among the University of Hawai'i, Department of Education, Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity, Agribusiness Development Corporation, Department of Labor and Industrial Relations, and appropriate community organizations.

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** 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 committees to pass SB2320** to establish the Kuleana AgTech Pathways Pilot 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

**SB-2320**

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 7:30:10 AM

Testimony for EDU on 2/18/2026 4:15:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Clyds Manzano	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

My name is Clyds Manzano, a resident of Waipahu. I am writing in strong support of SB2320, which establishes the Kuleana AgTech Pathways Program.

Hawai'i's agricultural workforce is aging, and many farms are struggling to scale. Between 2017 and 2022, the number of farms in Hawai'i declined by over 10%, and the average farmer age now exceeds 60. At the same time, Hawai'i imports the majority of its food. Without clear pathways for youth to enter agriculture, we risk continued contraction of our local food.

The bill addresses both the need to adapt to the ongoing changes of technological development and workforce development. With the Generational Workforce Commitment of ensuring that by 2045 every residents has a clear path to a living wage career. The bill aims to build a foundation to enhance career readiness for our youth and build viable job markets for the future.

I respectfully urge the Committee to support SB2320.

Mahalo,

Clyds Manzano

**February 2026**

**To:**

Chair Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair Herbert M. “Tim” Richards, III, and Members of the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment (AEN)

Chair Donna Mercado Kim, Vice Chair Michelle N. Kidani, and Members of the Senate Committee on Education (EDU)

**Subject:** SB2320 – Relating to Agriculture (Kuleana AgTech Pathways Program)

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, Chair Kim, Vice Chair Kidani, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Carlin Rose McFadden. I serve as a Lead Advocate in Civic Engagement with the 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 this measure.

KAPP was born from direct classroom experience. While teaching Geographic Information Systems to Hawai‘i youth through place based, community grounded learning, I watched students begin to understand agriculture differently. They were mapping food access, land use, water systems, and climate risks in their own communities. They were not just learning software. They were seeing possibility.

Several students shared that this experience introduced them to careers they had never known existed. Careers in geospatial analysis, drone operations, agricultural data systems, climate modeling, and food systems planning. Agriculture shifted from being perceived narrowly as labor to being recognized as science, technology, business, and stewardship. That shift is exactly what Hawai‘i’s workforce needs.

Hawai‘i’s agricultural sector is aging. Public reporting based on federal census data shows that Hawai‘i has the oldest farmers in the United States (Civil Beat, 2024). At the same time, the State continues to rely heavily on imported food, creating structural vulnerability during shipping disruptions and natural disasters (DBEDT, n.d.). Beginning farmers nationwide face persistent barriers including land access and capital constraints (Congressional Research Service, 2024), and in Hawai‘i those barriers are intensified by high costs and limited entry pathways.

SB2320 responds to this structural challenge by building an education to workforce pipeline grounded in modern agricultural technology.

Agriculture today is deeply connected to data and systems thinking. Water management, drought exposure, wildfire risk, soil monitoring, pest response, and logistics are spatial and analytical problems. During the 2023 Lahaina wildfires, Hawai‘i based institutions and federal partners relied heavily on GIS for impact estimation, parcel mapping, and response coordination (Pacific Disaster Center, 2024; U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, 2023). NASA also deployed geospatial disaster mapping tools to assist responders (NASA Applied Sciences, 2023). These same technical competencies are used in precision agriculture, climate smart farming, and resource planning.

Geospatial literacy is civic infrastructure. SB2320 builds that capacity locally.

The bill establishes the Kuleana AgTech Pathways Program within the University of Hawai‘i system and requires collaboration with HIDOE, agriculture agencies, workforce agencies, and community partners. It creates county aligned hubs, structured internships and apprenticeships, dual credit pathways, and tiered certifications, with explicit training in GIS, drone operations, climate smart agriculture, and agricultural data systems.

Recent community feedback reinforces the need for this approach. Students and producers consistently identified structural barriers rather than lack of interest. They cited land access, lack of mentorship, limited visibility of agricultural careers, and economic instability as primary challenges. Multiple respondents emphasized that internships must be compensated to ensure equitable access. Farmers across islands expressed willingness to serve as host sites if coordination and support are provided.

For this reason, the appropriations in SB2320 are essential. Funding is necessary to build coordinator capacity, support educator training, secure shared equipment, and provide compensated work based learning. Without dedicated investment, the program risks being symbolic. With investment, it becomes durable infrastructure.

Other states demonstrate that strong agricultural pathways require structure and coordination. Connecticut’s agricultural science centers require supervised agricultural work experience as part of program design. Florida has formal Precision Agriculture frameworks and work based learning standards. California aligns regional hubs across research, industry, and workforce development. SB2320 brings these proven principles into a Hawai‘i specific model aligned to our geography and needs.

KAPP is a win for students because it expands high skill career visibility.

It is a win for farmers because it builds structured workforce entry and mentorship pipelines.

It is a win for the State because it strengthens food security and builds in state technical capacity for agriculture and emergency response.

SB2320 invests in people as infrastructure. By cultivating locally trained stewards equipped with transferable technical competencies, Hawai‘i strengthens both its food system and its resilience.

Mahalo for your time and consideration. I respectfully urge your strong support of SB2320.

Respectfully,

Carlin Rose McFadden

**SB-2320**

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 3:34:39 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/18/2026 4:15:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Cardenas Pintor	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I support this bill.

Mahalo nui,

Cardenas Pintor

**LATE**

**SB-2320**

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 7:53:45 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/18/2026 4:15:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Beth Anderson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

There are so many reasons it is so important to support SB 2320. Thank you for introducing and supporting a pathway toward creating food security in our state. Providing a program to create career pipelines in the fields of agriculture and agriculture technology is one of the most important things we can do for the future of our State and the future of youth who want to engage in agriculture careers. Starting the program at the high school and creating a transition to the University of Hawaii helps guarantee success for students in the program.

I fully support SB 2320