

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
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**TESTIMONY OF SHARON HURD
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE AND BIOSECURITY
BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS**

**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 18, 2026
9:30 AM
CONFERENCE ROOM 325**

**SENATE BILL NO. 2798, SENATE DRAFT 1
RELATING TO LAW ENFORCEMENT**

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

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill No. 2798, SD 1 that makes permanent the Agricultural Enforcement Pilot Program established pursuant to Act 235, SLH 2025. The program is to be renamed as the Agricultural Enforcement Program and expands the program statewide.

The Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity (DAB) strongly supports this measure. Agricultural crimes is a serious problem and a challenge for farmers and ranchers on all islands. Agricultural crimes reduce the viability of agricultural operations and threatens public safety. Farmers and ranchers should not have to be fearful just trying to make a living and having permanent dedicated law enforcement will reduce these pressures. DAB otherwise defers to the Department of Law Enforcement and their pivotal role in protecting the State's agricultural legacy and the individuals and communities who dedicate themselves to this critical industry.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



MIKE LAMBERT
Director

ERNEST J. ROBELLO
Deputy Director
Administration

SYLVIA LUKE
LT GOVERNOR
KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA

STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF LAW ENFORCEMENT

Ka 'Oihana Ho'okō Kānāwai

715 South King Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

JARED K. REDULLA
Deputy Director
Law Enforcement

TESTIMONY ON SENATE BILL 2798, SENATE DRAFT 1

RELATING TO LAW ENFORCEMENT

Before the House Committee on

AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

Wednesday, March 18, 2026, 9:30 AM

State Capitol Conference Room 325

Testifier: Mike Lambert

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

The Department of Law Enforcement (DLE) supports Senate Bill 2798, Senate Draft 1. This bill makes permanent the Agricultural Enforcement Pilot Program originally established pursuant to Act 235, Session Laws of Hawaii 2025, renames it the Agricultural Enforcement Program, and expands the program statewide. It amends Hawaii Revised Statutes Section 353C-16 and modifies the relevant provisions of Act 235, SLH 2025, with an effective date of July 1, 2050.

DLE supports SB2798 SD1 for numerous reasons. First, DLE has recognized the critical need to address agricultural crimes in Hawaii. Agricultural theft and vandalism continue to harm Hawaii's farming communities, threaten food security, and undermine the livelihoods of those who contribute to the State's agricultural economy. Since its inception, the Agricultural Enforcement Pilot Program has represented a meaningful and targeted response to these pressing concerns and making the program permanent reflects the State's commitment to sustaining that response over the long term.

Second, the DLE believes that expanding the program statewide is a natural and necessary progression. Agricultural crimes are not confined to a single county or region. Hawaii's farmers and agricultural operations across all islands face vulnerabilities that require a coordinated, uniform enforcement presence. A statewide Agricultural Enforcement Program ensures that all of Hawaii's agricultural communities receive equal protection and that enforcement efforts are consistent, well-resourced, and strategically deployed.

Third, this bill aligns directly with the DLE's broader mission of centralizing and strengthening state law enforcement functions to improve public safety and reduce duplication of efforts. The DLE has previously engaged with farmers, community leaders, and the Department of Agriculture to build collaborative relationships to combat agricultural crime. Making this program permanent and expanding it statewide furthers those collaborative efforts and provides a stable, institutional framework for enforcement officers to operate effectively across the State.

Finally, renaming the program as the Agricultural Enforcement Program signals a long-term institutional commitment to protecting Hawaii's agricultural sector. This is not merely a symbolic change but a reflection of the program's maturation from a pilot initiative to a permanent and essential component of Hawaii's law enforcement infrastructure.

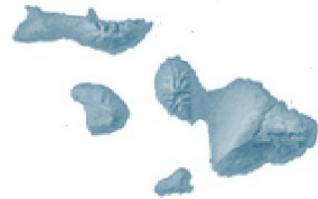
The DLE looks forward to continued collaboration with the Department of Agriculture, county law enforcement partners, and agricultural stakeholders to ensure the success of the Agricultural Enforcement Program as it expands statewide.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this bill.

RICHARD T. BISSEN, JR.
Mayor

ANDREW H. MARTIN
Prosecuting Attorney

SHELLY C. MIYASHIRO
First Deputy Prosecuting Attorney



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TESTIMONY ON
S.B. 2798 SD1
RELATING TO LAW ENFORCEMENT

March 16, 2026

The Honorable Cory M. Chun
Chair
The Honorable Matthias Kusch
Vice Chair
and Members of the Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems

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

The Department of the Prosecuting Attorney, County of Maui respectfully submits the following comments **in support of S.B. 2798 SD1, Relating to Law Enforcement**. This bill protects local agriculture by making permanent the Agricultural Enforcement Pilot Program established by Act 235 SLH 2025 and expands the program statewide.

We support this bill because it will help reduce agriculture crime statewide. For years, if not decades, our farmers and ranchers have been targeted by criminals that destroy vital farm infrastructure such as equipment, storage units, fences and gates; illegally hunt and poach on ranch lands; and steal valuable crops. Although our law enforcement partners have increased the assistance provided to the agriculture community, the relative isolation of most farms and ranches make it difficult to hold criminals responsible for the damage they cause to an already endangered industry. The resources and authority allocated by this bill would be a significant step in helping keep our farms and ranches safe.

For these reasons, the Department of the Prosecuting Attorney, County of Maui **supports S.B. 2798 SD1**. Please feel free to contact our office at (808) 270-7777 if you have any questions or inquiries. Thank you very much for the opportunity to provide testimony on this bill.

KELDEN B.A. WALTJEN
PROSECUTING ATTORNEY

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OFFICE OF THE PROSECUTING ATTORNEY

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 2798 SD1

A BILL FOR AN ACT
RELATING TO LAW ENFORCEMENT

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

Representative Corey M. Chun, Chair
Representative Matthias Kusch, Vice Chair

Wednesday, March 18, 2026 at 9:30 a.m.
Via Videoconference
State Capitol Conference Room 325
415 South Beretania Street

Honorable Chair Chun, Vice-Chair Kusch and Members of the Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems : The County of Hawai'i, Office of the Prosecuting Attorney submits the following testimony **in support** of Senate Bill 2798, Senate Draft 1.

SB 2798 SD1 was drafted with the intent to make permanent the Agricultural Enforcement Pilot Program established pursuant to Act 235, SLH 2025, renames the program as the Agricultural Enforcement Program, and expands the program statewide.

Hawai'i Island plays a critical role in the State's agricultural production. SB 2798 SD1 has the potential to enhance the safety and sustainability of our farming and agricultural industry by holding offenders accountable, deterring future agriculture crime, and encouraging farmers and ranchers to focus more on producing high-quality products using sustainable practices rather than worrying about the security of their agricultural operations. This bill also aims to address ongoing concerns related issues that have long plagued our Hawai'i Island agriculture community including illegal hunting on private lands, animal trespass resulting in property damage, and other agriculture crimes.

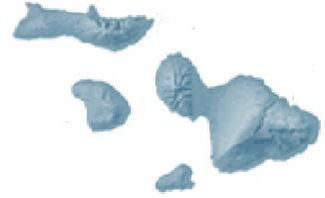
If signed into law, this legislation would enable the agriculture community to:

1. Safeguard our agricultural industry, which is the bread basket of the State of Hawai'i.
2. Enable our farmers, growers, and ranchers to remain competitive on the global market with Hawai'i-grown products.
3. Hold offenders accountable for actions that undermine food security and hinder economic development for the state.

The County of Hawai‘i, Office of the Prosecuting Attorney is dedicated to pursuing justice with integrity and commitment. SB 2798 SD1 represents a significant step toward addressing the serious food security and economic issues caused by agricultural crimes. For these reasons, the County of Hawai‘i, Office of the Prosecuting Attorney supports the passage of Senate Bill 2798, Seante Draft 1. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this matter.

RICHARD T. BISSEN, JR.
Mayor

JOSIAH K. NISHITA
Managing Director



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TO: Representative Cory M. Chun, Chair
Representative Matthias Kusch, Vice Chair
Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems

FROM: Richard T. Bissen, Jr., Mayor
Rogerene Arce, Director of Agriculture

DATE: March 2, 2026

SUBJECT: **SUPPORT OF SB2798, RELATING TO LAW ENFORCEMENT**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **SUPPORT** of this important measure.

The Act makes permanent the Agricultural Enforcement Pilot Program established pursuant to Act 235, SLH 2025. Renames the program as the Agricultural Enforcement Program and expands the program statewide.

We **SUPPORT** SB278 for the following reasons:

- 1. Empowers Farmers Against Theft:** Permanently codifying the Agricultural Enforcement Program relieves Maui County farmers and ranchers from the burden of agricultural theft victimization by providing consistent, proactive enforcement, safeguarding their livelihoods and reducing financial losses.
- 2. Economic Stability for Outer Islands:** Making the program permanent supports Maui County's full-time farmers/ranchers and outer island operations by freeing up department resources for education and prevention, sustaining jobs and food security without added costs.
- 3. Equity for Outer Island Farms:** Permanency extends the same robust enforcement privileges already piloted successfully on Oahu to Maui and other outer island farms, ensuring all Hawaii producers—regardless of location—benefit from equal protection against theft and biosecurity threats.

Mahalo for your consideration.



Hawaii Cattlemen's Council, Inc.

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

Rep. Cory M. Chun, Chair
Rep. Matthias Kusch, Vice Chair

SB2798 SD1

RELATING TO THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII

March 18, 2026, 9:30 AM
Conference Room 325 & Videoconference

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

The Hawaii Cattlemen's Council **supports SB2798 SD1** which makes permanent the Agricultural Enforcement Pilot Program established pursuant to Act 235, SLH 2025. Renames the program as the Agricultural Enforcement Program and expands the program statewide.

Thanks to the Agricultural Enforcement Pilot Program, we have had more attention and resources directed towards agricultural crime than ever before. Expanding this program statewide is necessary, as agricultural producers experience vandalism, trespassing, poaching, and theft in all counties. We urge the legislature to ensure that with the expansion of the program, the permanent program receives adequate funding for the Department of Law Enforcement to hire, train, and retain staffing to address the needs of those who grow food for our community.

We appreciate the opportunity to testify on this measure. The Hawaii Cattlemen's Council (HCC) is the Statewide umbrella organization comprised of the four county-level Cattlemen's Associations. Ranchers produce a high-quality protein and are the stewards of almost 750 thousand acres of land in Hawaii, or nearly 20% of the State's total land mass. We represent the interests of Hawaii's cattle producers.

Nicole Galase
Hawaii Cattlemen's Council
Managing Director





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March 18, 2026

HEARING BEFORE THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

TESTIMONY ON SB 2798, SD1
RELATING TO LAW ENFORCEMENT

Conference Room 325 & Videoconference
9:30 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 SB 2798, SD1, which makes permanent the Agricultural Enforcement Pilot Program established pursuant to Act 235, SLH 2025, renames it the Agricultural Enforcement Program, and expands the program statewide.

Agricultural crime remains a serious and ongoing challenge for farmers and ranchers across all islands, not just on O'ahu and Hawai'i Island. Theft, trespass, vandalism, poaching, and illegal dumping directly threaten farm and ranch viability, public safety, and agriculture production statewide.

While Agricultural Enforcement Pilot Program is limited geographically, agricultural crime is not confined to just two islands. Farmers and ranchers on Maui, Moloka'i, Lāna'i, and Kaua'i experience similar challenges and deserve the same level of protection and support as those on O'ahu and Hawai'i Island.

We appreciate that this measure builds on an existing program rather than creating a new one. Making the program permanent and statewide recognizes that agricultural crime is not a temporary issue and requires sustained, dedicated enforcement resources. The Agricultural Enforcement Program allows law enforcement officers to focus on offenses involving agricultural products and commodities and to work collaboratively with federal, state, and county partners.

Farmers and ranchers already face numerous risks beyond their control, including weather, pests, disease, market volatility, and labor shortages. Agricultural crime adds another layer of uncertainty that undermines investment and long-term planning. A dedicated, statewide Agricultural Enforcement Program helps deter crime, improve response times, and sends a clear message that agricultural crimes will be taken seriously.

HFB appreciates the Legislature's continued attention to this issue and urges the Committee to support SB 2798, SD1, to ensure that all agricultural communities across the State benefit from consistent and effective agricultural law enforcement.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.



March 12, 2026

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

Subject: Testimony in Support of SB2798 SD1 – Relating to Law Enforcement

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

My name is Carlin McFadden, writing on behalf of Hawai'i Food+ Policy in strong support of **SB2798 SD1**, which makes permanent the Agricultural Enforcement Pilot Program established pursuant to Act 235, Session Laws of Hawai'i 2025, renames it the Agricultural Enforcement Program, and expands its operation statewide.

This measure is important to the long-term durability and resilience of Hawai'i's agricultural sector. Farmers and ranchers across the islands continue to face theft, trespass, vandalism, and other unlawful activity that disrupt operations, create financial strain, and undermine confidence in the viability of agricultural production. These harms are not isolated. They affect equipment, livestock, crops, and the overall ability of producers to plan, invest, and sustain their operations over time.

SB2798 SD1 strengthens the bill by clearly moving beyond a limited pilot structure and establishing a permanent, statewide Agricultural Enforcement Program within the Department of Law Enforcement. The amendment removing the prior sunset and extending the program statewide is especially meaningful. Agricultural crime is not confined to only a few islands, and the State should not rely on a temporary approach to address a persistent statewide need. Making this program permanent sends a clear message that protecting agricultural producers and agricultural lands is a lasting priority.

Hawai'i Food+ Policy supports efforts that strengthen a sustainable, resilient, and equitable food system. That mission necessarily includes protecting the people and places responsible for producing local food. When farmers and ranchers are forced to absorb repeated losses from theft and related crime, the burden is not only personal or operational. It also affects broader food system stability, weakens rural economic resilience, and discourages long-term agricultural investment.

This program also supports stronger coordination and prevention. By maintaining dedicated personnel focused on agricultural enforcement, the State is better positioned to improve investigations, evidence gathering, interagency cooperation, and mutual aid related to agricultural activity. A more consistent and specialized response can help address ongoing enforcement gaps while also building trust with agricultural communities that often feel overlooked.

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.



**HAWAI'I
FOOD+
POLICY**

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In addition, specialized agricultural enforcement capacity can help reduce escalation and improve public safety. Producers should not be left feeling that they must handle recurring theft and trespass issues on their own. A permanent statewide enforcement structure provides a more appropriate and accountable response.

For these reasons, Hawai'i Food+ Policy strongly supports SB2798 SD1 and respectfully urges the Committee to pass this measure.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,
Carlin McFadden
Hawai'i Food+ Policy
#fixourfoodsystem

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-2798-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 8:50:49 AM

Testimony for AGR on 3/18/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Warren Watanabe	Maui County Farm Bureau	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The Maui County Farm Bureau strongly supports SB2798 SD1, Relating to Law Enforcement. Agricultural trespass, vandalism, and theft continues to be a serious threat to our farmers and ranchers on Maui. This issue is another burden farmers and ranchers must deal with on a daily basis. MCFB supports the renaming of the program to the Agricultural Enforcement Program and expanding the program statewide. Thank you.

SB-2798-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/15/2026 5:40:46 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/18/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jason Moniz	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This Bill is extremely important to agriculture producers, please support it.