



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



Date: 04/08/2026

Time: 01:02 PM

Location: CR 229 & Videoconference

Committee: EDU/AEN

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Keith T. Hayashi, Superintendent of Education

Title of Bill: SCR130, URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND BIOSECURITY TO JOINTLY DEVELOP A FARMER-TO-INSTITUTION COORDINATION PLAN THAT IS ALIGNED WITH THE AINA KITCHEN NETWORK ROLLOUT.

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

Department's Position:

The Hawaii State Department of Education (Department) appreciates the opportunity to provide comments in regards to SCR 130.

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

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

The Department is part of a collective of State agencies, including the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity (DAB), that are currently working to establish a Memorandum of Understanding between the DAB, Agribusiness Development Corporation, the Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism, the Department of Health, the Department of the Attorney General, the Department of Transportation, the University Of Hawaii, Leeward Community College, the Department Of Labor and Industrial Relations, and the Department to support the nutrition of Hawaii's keiki. The workgroup which also includes other partners, such as the Hawaii Farm Bureau, and is currently collaborating on aligning the supply and demand of commodities to meet the needs of the AINA Kitchen Network and the 2030 goal.

In regard to the request for a proposal to implement software to replace handwritten records, the Department is rolling out K-12 food service software starting in June 2026 that will replace handwritten records, after just completing the procurement process

that began over a year ago. The resolution points out that both Departments are understaffed. Funding and FTE would be needed to create another plan. In light of both branches being understaffed and currently committed to several large-scale initiatives, we urge the committees to consider consolidating the multiple overlapping resolutions currently brought forward requesting work groups, reports, and plans in relation to local procurement and the regional kitchens.

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

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this resolution.



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TO: Committee on Agriculture
FROM: HAWAII FOOD INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION
Lauren Zirbel, Executive Director

DATE: April 8, 2026
TIME: 10am

RE: SR122 SCR 130 URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND BIOSECURITY TO JOINTLY DEVELOP A FARMER-TO-INSTITUTION COORDINATION PLAN THAT IS ALIGNED WITH THE AINA KITCHEN NETWORK ROLLOUT.

Position: Support

The Hawaii Food Industry Association is comprised of two hundred member companies representing retailers, suppliers, producers, manufacturers and distributors of food and beverage related products in the State of Hawaii.

HFIA is in support of this measure. Institutional purchasing can be a powerful tool in growing our local agricultural sector. This provides local farmers with consistent buyers who they can work with to maximize local production and economic viability. Developing a Farmer-to-Institution Coordination Plan aligned with the phased rollout of the AINA Kitchen Network can help enable institutional purchasing. This will also help ensure that our local keiki are able to enjoy fresh local food. We urge the Committee to pass the measure and we thank you for the opportunity to testify.



HAWAII APPLESEED

CENTER FOR LAW & ECONOMIC JUSTICE

Support for SCR 130/SR 122 – Urging Departments to Jointly Develop a Farmer-To-Institution Coordination Plan Aligned with the ‘Aina Kitchen Network Rollout
Joint Hearing of Senate Committees on Education and Agriculture and Environment
Wednesday, April 8, 2026, 1:02PM

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

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in **support of SCR 130/SR 122**, which urges the Hawai‘i Department of Education (HIDOE) and Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity (DAB) to jointly develop a “*Farmer-to-Institution Coordination Plan*” to guide the rollout of the state’s much anticipated regional kitchen initiative.

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

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

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

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

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

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

SCR-130

Submitted on: 4/6/2026 11:06:50 AM

Testimony for EDU on 4/8/2026 1:02:00 PM

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

Comments:

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

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

Mahalo nui for supporting farmers and our food security,

Christine Andrews, JD

Wailuku, Maui