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

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

Friday, April 17, 2026
10:30 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 325

In consideration of
SCR 41 SD1
**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 Committees:

The Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT) offers **comments** on SCR 41 SD1 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 SCR 41 SD1, 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.

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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.



OFFICE OF HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

‘Ōlelo Hō‘ike ‘Aha Kau Kānāwai

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 41 SD1
REQUESTING CERTAIN STATE AND COUNTY AGENCIES, IN COORDINATION WITH
COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS, TO DEVELOP A COMPREHENSIVE
STATEWIDE FOOD SECURITY STRATEGY

Ke Kōmike Hale o ka ‘Oihana Mahi‘ai a me ka ‘Ōnaehana Mea‘ai
(House Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems)

Ke Kapikala o Hawai‘i
(Hawai‘i State Capitol)

‘Apelila 17, 2026

10:30AM

Lumi 325

Aloha e Chair Chun, Vice Chair Kusch, and Members of the House Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems:

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) **SUPPORTS SCR41 SD1**, which requests certain State, County, and community organizations to develop a comprehensive statewide food security strategy.

The food insecurity crisis in Hawai‘i continues to grow. According to the Hawai‘i Foodbank’s *State of Food Insecurity in Hawai‘i 2024-2025* report, 32% of Hawai‘i households experience food insecurity, with Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders facing higher food insecurity levels than the statewide average. The inability to access affordable, nutritious, and culturally appropriate food is the repercussion of multiple intersecting disadvantages such as insufficient incomes, limited access to transportation, disability, and discrimination. Solutions to this crisis cannot be made by individual programs or institutions; it requires a coordinated systemic, equity-driven strategy.

OHA appreciates our inclusion in developing this comprehensive statewide food security strategy. Food security is inseparable from the health of our lāhui and ‘āina, as well as the perpetuation of cultural practices that sustain identity, dignity, and resilience. Investments in local agriculture, traditional food production, and food distribution networks can create pathways toward both increased food security and economic self-sufficiency.

For the reasons stated above, OHA respectfully urges this committee to **PASS SCR41 SD1.**

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



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

DATE: April 17, 2026
TIME: 10:30am

RE: SCR41 SD1 SR31 REQUESTING CERTAIN STATE AND COUNTY AGENCIES, IN COORDINATION WITH COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS, TO DEVELOP A COMPREHENSIVE STATEWIDE FOOD SECURITY STRATEGY.

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. As the measure notes, the most recent data from the Hawaii Foodbank shows that our state has over 30% food insecurity on average, with some parts of the state experiencing food insecurity rates of close to 40%. Creating a comprehensive data driven food security strategy is an important step to fighting food insecurity.

HFIA would be happy to participate in this assessment and contribute any expertise and industry knowledge that will be helpful

We would also suggest that the plan assesses the impact of the continued taxation of groceries in Hawaii and compares this to over 40 other states which do not tax the sale of groceries and their relative food insecurity rates. Applying the General Excise Tax to groceries increases food prices by close to 5% and amounts to roughly the equivalent of two weeks' worth of food budget lost to taxes each year for every Hawaii family. This is a relevant factor in understanding food affordability and accessibility in Hawaii.

SCR-41-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/15/2026 7:38:19 PM

Testimony for AGR on 4/17/2026 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Brian Miyamoto	Hawaii Farm Bureau	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

No Farms, No Food



**Testimony to the House Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems
Friday, April 17, 2026; 10:30 a.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 325
Via Videoconference**

RE: SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 041, SENATE DRAFT 1 -- 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 Hawaii Primary Care Association (HPCA) is a 501(c)(3) organization established to advocate for, expand access to, and sustain high quality care through the statewide network of Community Health Centers throughout the State of Hawaii. The HPCA **SUPPORTS** Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 041, Senate Draft 1 -- REQUESTING CERTAIN STATE AND COUNTY AGENCIES, IN COORDINATION WITH COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS, TO DEVELOP A COMPREHENSIVE STATEWIDE FOOD SECURITY STRATEGY., and **OFFERS A FRIENDLY AMENDMENT.**

By way of background, the HPCA represents Hawaii's Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs). FQHCs provide desperately needed medical services at the frontlines to over 150,000 patients each year who live in rural and underserved communities. Long considered champions for creating a more sustainable, integrated, and wellness-oriented system of health, FQHCs provide a more efficient, more effective and more comprehensive system of healthcare.

I. A DIFFERENT ANGLE TO THIS PROBLEM

During the interim following the Adjournment Sine Die of the 2025 Regular Session, four (4) events took place that have enormous ramifications on Hawaii's social safety net. These were:

- The enactment of House Resolution No. 1 (H.R. 1), the "One Big Beautiful Bill" Act, which was signed into law on July 4, 2025;
- The expiration of Enhanced Affordable Care Act (ACA) premium tax credits on December 31, 2025;

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- The reversal of interpretation of "federal public benefit" under the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, or "PRWORA", by the United States Department of Health and Human Services; and
- The announcement that the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services will share personal data of Medicaid enrollees to Immigration and Customs Enforcement officials.

In tandem, these developments will fundamentally alter Hawaii's Medicaid Program by shifting current ACA insureds and Medicaid recipients to the uninsured population. Among other things, H.R. 1 will:

- Prohibit the use of federal matching funds for health care services to immigrants not lawfully present under federal law, effective October 1, 2026;
- Establish work or volunteer requirements for all Medicaid recipients of at least 80 hours per month (or 20 hours per week), effective December 31, 2026; and
- Require redeterminations for every Medicaid recipient every six-months, also effective December 31, 2026.

The expiration of the ACA premium tax credits will:

- Lead to enrollee premium payments to increase by over 75%;
- Lead to households earning over 400% of the federal poverty level (\$63,000 for individuals and \$129,000 for a family of four) no longer receiving any premium tax credits; and
- Force states to provide additional state-funded subsidies to soften the financial impact.

Currently, Hawaii's uninsured population is estimated to be 38,400 or 2.8% of the total population. Based on research provided by the Kaiser Family Foundation as well as our review of Medicaid enrollment historically in Hawaii, **we believe the uninsured population will at least double within two to three years if nothing is done.**

Without health insurance coverage, citizens will no longer be able to manage chronic disease such as diabetes, high blood pressure, and other maladies. When they become ill, they will not get treated until the situation becomes so bad that they will need to go to a provider for emergency treatment. By then, the illness has become much more severe and costly to remedy. Also, by law, the emergency provider will have to provide stabilizing treatment to the patient regardless of the patient's ability to pay. These costs will subsequently be borne by the provider, creating additional stress to the safety net that is already facing reduced funding and reimbursement.

In the worst-case scenario, hospitals and FQHCs will not be able to treat the increase in indigent patients. While federal law requires FQHCs to provide services to all patients who are not eligible for Medicaid or private insurance on a sliding fee scale based on their ability to pay, federal grant funding to offset these costs were not adjusted to address the increase that will occur. As such, should Hawaii experience the largest projected increase in uninsured (and assuming that the level of services currently provided remains the same), FQHCs will run out of funds within two to three months.

II. HOW THIS IMPACTS FOOD SECURITY

With more people uninsured, the general health care of entire communities will decline. People will put off tending to their health care needs longer. Because of inflation and the lagging of salary increases, our citizens will have a harder time putting food on the table. More and more of Hawaii's population are struggling to survive. With fewer people insured, anytime a family member gets sick, moneys that went for food and rent will have to be shifted to pay for medicine and health provider visits.

And within two to three years, more of Hawaii's families will have to decide whether to forego medical attention to feed their Ohana.

The implementation dates for H.R. 1 are staggered with elements taking effect in October 2026, and others on January 1, 2027. When that happens, hundreds of citizens will lose their Medicaid coverage and fall into this situation.

IV. RECOMMENDATION

In light of all this, the HPCA respectfully requests that the resolution be amended to include findings noting the impacts of H.R. 1 on Hawaii's social safety net over the next three years and how the staggered implementation of this new law will exacerbate the food insecurity of Hawaii's families very quickly.

With these amendments, the HPCA supports the resolution.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Public Affairs and Policy Director Erik K. Abe at 536-8442, or eabe@hawaiiipca.net.