

A Bill for an Act Relating to the Food Hub Pilot Program.

*Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Hawaii:*

SECTION 1. The legislature finds that the State's food security may be strengthened by growing more food locally and increasing access to local food. This endeavor may be supported by establishing food hubs, which are centrally located facilities that have a business management structure that facilitates the aggregation, storage, processing, distribution, and marketing of locally produced food products. By actively coordinating these activities along the value chain, food hubs may provide wider access to institutional and retail markets for small- to mid-sized producers and increase consumer access to fresh and healthy food, including for those consumers in underserved areas and food deserts.

Recognizing that food hubs often encounter financial obstacles when seeking to launch or expand their operations, the legislature passed Act 313, Session Laws of Hawaii 2022, which established a five-year food hub pilot program that provides eligible applicants with financial assistance to establish and expand food hub operations on a scale to meet local demand. The legislature finds that additional funds are needed to continue the pilot program to assist food hubs in the State.

Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to appropriate funds for the continued implementation of the food hub pilot program, including the awarding of grant moneys to qualifying food hubs.

SECTION 2. There is appropriated out of the general revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$1,500,000 or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2025-2026 and the same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2026-2027 for the continued implementation of the food hub pilot program established pursuant to Act 313, Session Laws of Hawaii 2022, including the awarding of grant moneys to qualifying food hubs.

The sums appropriated shall be expended by the department of agriculture for the purposes of this Act.

SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2025.

(Approved June 6, 2025.)