

**STATE OF HAWAI'I
OFFICE OF PLANNING
& SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

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GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE
LT. GOVERNOR

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Statement of
MARY ALICE EVANS, Director

before the
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS
Friday, February 7, 2025, 9:30 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 325

in consideration of
HB 1450
RELATING TO AGRICULTURAL CLIMATE RESILIENCY.

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

The Office of Planning and Sustainable Development (OPSD) **supports** HB 967, which establishes a three-year climate-resilient food systems grant pilot program, to be administered by the Department of Agriculture. Requires reports to the Legislature.

Hawai'i's reliance on imported food makes our communities vulnerable to global supply chain disruptions. Investing in local agricultural production through targeted grants will enhance food security by equipping farmers with the necessary tools and technology to adapt to climate change. Rising temperatures, shifting rainfall patterns, and extreme weather events threaten the viability of farming statewide, underscoring the urgent need for adaptive solutions.

By supporting farmers with specialized equipment such as precision irrigation systems, drought-resistant crop varieties, and clean energy technologies, this program can empower Hawai'i's local farmers to adapt to climate impacts while maintaining productive and sustainable operations.

Prioritizing climate resilient agriculture strengthens Hawai'i's economy, preserves our agricultural heritage, and ensures access to fresh, locally grown food for future generations.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of this measure.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
Governor

SYLVIA LUKE
Lt. Governor



SHARON HURD
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

DEAN M. MATSUKAWA
Deputy to the Chairperson

State of Hawai'i
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
KA 'OIHANA MAHI'AI
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TESTIMONY OF SHARON HURD
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2025
9:30 AM
CONFERENCE ROOM 325

HOUSE BILL NO. 1450
RELATING TO AGRICULTURAL CLIMATE RESILIENCY

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

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 1450. This bill establishes a three-year climate-resilient food systems grant pilot program, to be administered by the Department of Agriculture, requires reports to the Legislature and appropriates funds.

The Department of Agriculture (Department) is in strong support of this measure that addresses feedback from agricultural producers that the high cost of equipment is a major barrier to expanding operations. The USDA Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure Program, administered by the Department, that provided \$2.6 million in funding for middle-of-the-supply-chain infrastructure, received 104 applications, 17 of which were funded, leaving 87 proposals, requesting a total of \$16.6 million, unfunded. These unfunded projects could be considered in the pilot program as well as new applications.

The Department agrees with the Legislature's finding that small family farms and ranches urgently need capital to invest in technology and essential equipment to sustain their operations and maintain economic viability. Agriculture inherently operates in a high-risk environment, and the anticipated impacts of climate change have introduced

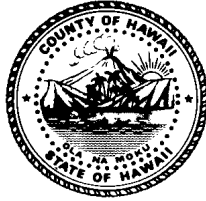


additional challenges for our local farmers and ranchers. Many are seeking to adopt new technologies and equipment to enhance productivity and sustain their livelihoods. This grant pilot program presents a valuable opportunity to support these efforts..

The Department commits to administering the Agricultural Climate Resiliency pilot program as required in the bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

C. Kimo Alameda, Ph.D.
Mayor



Benson Medina
Director

Dennis Lin
Deputy Director

County of Hawai'i

DEPARTMENT OF RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

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February 5, 2025

HEARING BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

FRIDAY, February 7, 2025
9:30 AM
CONFERENCE ROOM 325

TESTIMONY ON HB 1450
Relating to Agricultural Climate Resiliency

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

I am Benson Medina, Director of the Department of Research and Development, County of Hawai'i. One of the agricultural objectives of this department is to "support research, development, control, and education that improves agricultural production, quality, resilience, and producer viability."

The County of Hawai'i provides written testimony in **SUPPORT of HB1450**, to establish a three-year climate-resilient food systems grant pilot program administered by the Department of Agriculture.

The State of Hawai'i aims to at least double local food production, with a goal of 20-30% of food consumed is grown locally ([Aloha+ Challenge](#)). However, gaps in production, aggregation, and processing of agricultural products limits the productivity and growth of Hawai'i agriculture ([Office of Planning](#), 2012; [Hāmākua Institute](#), 2021).

Producers are motivated to overcome these challenges to meet statewide goals yet require assistance in the form of grants and infrastructure. In fact, 2 out of 3 (66.9%) of producers in Hawai'i with at least \$50,000 in estimated gross production expressed interest in expanding operations within 6-9 months, and more advanced farm equipment was the most needed technology cited by these farms to increase productivity ([Hawaii Commercial Agricultural Expansion Survey](#), NASS 2021).

In 2024, the County of Hawai'i supported Hawai'i Department of Agriculture (HDOA) in launching a statewide process with stakeholders that identified the industry's top economic barriers and highlighted the urgency to address long-standing challenges within the sector. Through this process, equipment costs were identified as the third highest-ranking issue impacting producer economic viability statewide in 2024. HB1450 would help to address this need to support producers in expanding operations and building climate resiliency.

May 1, 2023

Page 2

Thank you for championing agriculture in Hawai'i and for the opportunity to provide testimony in **SUPPORT** of HB1450.

Respectfully,

Benson Medina
Director, Research and Development
County of Hawai'i



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February 7, 2025

HEARING BEFORE THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

TESTIMONY ON HB 1450
RELATING TO AGRICULTURAL CLIMATE RESILIENCY

Conference Room 325 & Videoconference
9:30 AM

Aloha Chair Kahaloa, 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 HB 1450, which establishes a three-year climate-resilient food systems grant pilot program to be administered by the Department of Agriculture. This program will provide essential resources to help Hawai'i's farmers and ranchers adapt to the increasing challenges posed by climate change while strengthening local food production and food security.

Hawai'i's agricultural sector faces growing threats from climate-related factors, including extreme weather events, prolonged droughts, rising temperatures, and shifting pest and disease patterns. These challenges threaten both short-term crop yields and long-term farm viability. A climate-resilient food systems grant program will allow farmers and ranchers to implement innovative practices and infrastructure improvements that mitigate these risks and ensure the stability of Hawai'i's local food supply.

The program will provide grants ranging from \$10,000 to \$100,000 to agricultural producers for the acquisition of special-purpose equipment, technology, and ancillary costs. These funds will help farmers invest in tools and infrastructure that directly improve their ability to respond to climate-related challenges. Special-purpose equipment such as advanced irrigation systems, soil monitoring technology, pest and disease management tools, and renewable energy systems can enhance farm efficiency and sustainability.

Agriculture, like all businesses, requires capital investment. The cost of operating a farm or ranch in Hawai'i can be significant. Many of Hawai'i's farmers and ranchers are struggling to secure the financial support necessary to build capacity and invest in

climate-resilient infrastructure. A climate-resilient food systems grant program can provide critical assistance, helping agricultural operations remain viable in the face of increasing environmental pressures. By ensuring that farmers and ranchers have access to grants for climate-smart investments, the state can support local agriculture while also addressing the broader goal of increasing food security and self-sufficiency.

We also support the program's focus on tracking outcomes and requiring reports to the Legislature. Data collected through this pilot initiative can help inform future agricultural policies and funding decisions, ensuring that state resources are directed toward the most effective climate adaptation strategies.

To maximize the success of this program, we encourage the Department of Agriculture to work closely with local farmers, ranchers, agricultural researchers, and industry stakeholders in developing the grant criteria. This collaboration will ensure that funding is accessible and targeted toward practical solutions that address the real challenges faced by food producers in Hawai'i.

We urge the committee to pass HB 1450 to establish this climate-resilient food systems grant pilot program, which will help protect and strengthen Hawai'i's agricultural industry in the face of climate change.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



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Honolulu, O'ahu

Natalie Urminska
Kaua'i

Aloha Chair Kahalōa, Vice Chair Kusch, and Members of the House Agriculture & Food Systems Committee,

The Hawai'i Farmers Union is a 501(c)(5) agricultural advocacy nonprofit representing a network of over 2,500 family farmers and their supporters across the Hawaiian Islands. **HFU supports HB1450.**

By establishing a three-year climate-resilient food systems grant pilot program, this bill directly supports farmers in implementing sustainable and innovative practices designed to enhance both productivity and environmental stewardship. Such a program is crucial for fostering resilience against climate-related disruptions, ensuring food security, and promoting sustainable agricultural practices that will benefit farmers and the wider community alike.

The appropriations made through this bill will facilitate necessary investments in research, technology, and infrastructure that are vital for developing climate-smart agriculture in Hawaii. By empowering the Department of Agriculture to administer this grant program, this bill aims to create a framework for collaborative efforts that include farmers, researchers, and policymakers. This approach not only strengthens the resilience of agricultural systems but also stimulates the local economy, promotes biodiversity, and mitigates the impacts of climate change.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Hunter Heavilin
Advocacy Director
Hawai'i Farmers Union



February 6, 2025

To: Chair Kahaloa, Vice Chair Kusch and the House Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems

Subject: **HB1450** , Relating to Agricultural Climate Resiliency

Aloha,

I am writing in **support** of **HB1450** which encourages the Department of Agriculture's initiative "Go B.I.G. for agriculture" program. This program offers grants to small-mid scale farms/ ranches in an effort to aid in the efforts of their efficiency and productivity, namely through expensive machinery.

Supporting small scale farms is essential in the effort to fix the food system of Hawai'i as these farms are crucial in the local endeavors toward food sovereignty. Investing in the supply chain will naturally expand the scale of agricultural development within the state. In this, local food production will increase, fresh food will be more accessible, and the economic growth surrounding small scale agriculture will increase.

It is important to note that this bill also acts as a preventative measure from the effects of climate change on agriculture. Investing in this bill will allow farmers time and efficiency in adapting to changes in climate. Some climate relevant obstacles farmers face in Hawai'i include: flash floods, extreme heat, and tropical storms -- just to name a few. Often farmers lose many crops when affected by these natural phenomena. Especially on the small-mid size farm scale, climate resilience is essential in allowing farmers to continue to have monetary access to continue to farm.

To ensure this bill goes out to small-mid scale farms and is appropriately distributed, this bill gives a list of regulations as to who is eligible for the grant, what the bill can be used for, how to ensure the money is accordingly spent, and when reports are due back to the legislator.

For the sake of accessibility to both farming and food in the state of Hawai'i please consider passing HB1450.

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 2025, 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**

Honolulu, HI 96813
food@purplemaia.org

Mahalo,
Lea iaea & the Food+ Policy Team
#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.

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To: The House Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems (AGR)
From: Sherry Pollack, Co-Founder, 350Hawaii.org
Date: Friday, February 7, 2025, 9:30am

In strong support of HB1450

Aloha Chair Kahaloa, Vice Chair Kusch, and AGR Committee members;

I am Co-Founder of the Hawaii chapter of 350.org, the largest international organization dedicated to fighting climate change. 350Hawaii.org is in **strong support of HB1450** that would establish a three-year climate-resilient food systems grant pilot program, to be administered by the Department of Agriculture.

By investing in local agriculture, we reduce our dependence on imported goods, creating a more resilient and sustainable food system for Hawaii. In doing so, we also avoid the greenhouse gases that would have been emitted from shipping food in, helping in our fight against climate breakdown. Moreover, investing in local agriculture directly stimulates the economy by creating local jobs. These efforts and more are the type of actions needed to move Hawaii to a decarbonized economy.

Supporting local agriculture is crucial for achieving food sustainability and climate resilience. Please pass this important measure.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in **strong support** of this important legislation.

Sherry Pollack
Co-Founder, 350Hawaii.org

HB-1450

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 10:56:47 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/7/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
penny levin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

In strong support. I would recommend this be a 5yr program as 3yrs is not sufficient to evaluate the effectiveness of the program, particularly if tree crops are considered, which can take a minimum three years to begin producing, eg. 'ulu.