

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
1428 South King Street
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96814-2512
Phone: (808) 973-9600 FAX: (808) 973-9613

TESTIMONY OF SHARON HURD
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 2025
1:02 PM
CONFERENCE ROOM 224

SENATE BILL NO. 1250
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill 1250. This bill seeks to establish the Farm to Families Program to help address food shortages in Hawai'i.

The Department of Agriculture (Department) supports this measure, which aims to strengthen the connection between local food banks and their partners to provide fresh, local grown produce to families in need while also expanding market opportunities for Hawai'i agricultural producers.

Finally, the Department respectfully requests that the Committee amend this measure, beginning on page 6, line 4, to include "volume and dollar value" in item (3), and revise item 4 to state "Category of food purchased (e.g., beef, pork, spinach, onions, etc.) and their island origin (e.g., Hawai'i, Maui, Molokai, etc.) by volume and dollar value." Last but not the least, we kindly request modifying "Any other findings and recommendations, including any proposed legislation." to item 5.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



RICHARD T. BISSEN, JR.
Mayor

JOSIAH K. NISHITA
Managing Director



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
COUNTY OF MAUI
200 SOUTH HIGH STREET
WAILUKU, MAUI, HAWAII 96793
www.mauicounty.gov

TO: Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair
Senator Herbet M. "Tim" Richards III, Vice Chair
Committee on Agriculture and Environment

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

DATE: February 1, 2025

SUBJECT: **SUPPORT OF SB1250, RELATING TO FARM TO FAMILIES**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **SUPPORT** of this important measure which establishes the Hawaii Farm to Families Program to alleviate food shortages in the State.

We **SUPPORT** this measure for the following reasons:

1. With the cost of importing food among other items continues to rise, increasing our local agriculture is required to ensure that our communities will be able to afford to stay here for generations to come.
2. This measure positions our community to have more robust and consistent markets, creates financial incentives for the next generation of farmers, and overall leads to a more resilient and sustainable Hawai'i.
3. With almost 30% of keiki living in food-insecure homes in Hawai'i, creating dependable access to nourishing food is a must.

Mahalo for your consideration.



2025 Network Members

Aloha Harvest
Aloha United Way
Chef Hui
City and County of Honolulu
County of Hawai'i
Hawai'i Alliance for
Progressive Action (HAPA)
Hawai'i Appleseed
Hawai'i Children's Action
Network
Hawai'i Dept. of Agriculture
Hawai'i Dept. of Health
Hawai'i Food Bank
Hawai'i Food Bank - Kua'i
Branch
Hawai'i Good Food Alliance
Hawai'i Public Health Institute
Kōkua Kalihi Valley
Lanakila Pacific
Mālama Kua'i
Maui Department of
Agriculture
Maui Food Bank
Parents and Children Together
Supersistence
The Food Basket
The Pantry, by Feeding Hawai'i
Together
Wai'anae Coast
Comprehensive Health Center

hawaiihungeraction.org

Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment
February 3, 2025 at 1:02pm

RE: Support for SB 1250, Relating to Farm to Families

Dear Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and members of the Committee:

The Hawai'i Hunger Action Network, a coalition of more than twenty local organizations with the mission to advocate for food security for Hawai'i households, would like to express strong support for SB 1250. This bill would appropriate funds for the Farm to Families program.

Our network is intimately familiar with the toll disasters can take on communities, and many of our members are at the frontlines of response efforts. Whether it is in response to wildfires, a pandemic, a government shutdown, a hurricane, flood, volcano eruption—or just the day-to-day emergency of needing to put food on the table in an economy when many families are one paycheck away from financial devastation—our emergency food partners are there to respond to the community's needs. And they often do this on very stretched and limited resources.

A strong emergency food system is a critical pillar of resiliency, not just because of its role in a disaster, but also in its potential to strengthen local food supply chains and our island's agricultural economy. This program would be a powerful step toward achieving this outcome, by guaranteeing that nutritious food is available to more families, supporting local farmers, and even reducing farm food waste.

Thank you for your leadership and for your consideration of this important legislation.



Date: February 3, 2025

Subject: Hawai'i Foodbank in Strong Support of SB 1250 Relating to Farm to Families

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and members of the committee,

On behalf of Hawai'i Foodbank, I express our **STRONG** support for SB 1250, Relating to Farm to Families. This bill establishes the Hawai'i Farm to Families Program to address food shortages across the state, requires reports to the Legislature before the Regular Sessions of 2026 and 2027, and appropriates funds to support its implementation.

As the state's largest hunger-relief organization, Hawai'i Foodbank has been committed to ensuring no one in Hawai'i goes hungry since 1983. We work with over 225 agency partners on O'ahu and Kaua'i to distribute food, and programs like Food 4 Keiki and 'Ohana Produce Plus provide nutritious meals to children and families. In addition to addressing daily needs, our organization mobilizes during emergencies to provide immediate relief and aid long-term recovery efforts.

In addition, Hawai'i Foodbank's Farm to Families program, launched in 2020, has already demonstrated its impact by investing \$11 million into more than 40 local farms and food hubs, distributing over 9 million pounds of Hawai'i-grown produce and proteins. SB 1250 will expand this initiative by strengthening the supply chain, ensuring fresh, Hawai'i-grown food reaches food-insecure households while supporting local agriculture.

This bill is critically needed. The "State of Food Insecurity in Hawai'i" report revealed that in 2023, 30% of households in our state experience food insecurity, including 29% of children. In 10% of these households, at least one member went without food for an entire day some or most months of the year. These figures highlight the urgent need for a sustainable solution to hunger in Hawai'i.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this vital measure and for your dedication to supporting our communities through initiatives like SB 1250.

With aloha,

Amy Miller
President and CEO, Hawai'i Foodbank



Officers

Kaipo Kekona
State President

Anabella Bruch
Vice-President

Maureen Datta
Secretary

Reba Lopez
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Kohala, Hawaii

Tony Vera
East Hawaii

Puna, Hawaii

Andrea Drayer
Ka'u, Hawaii

Maureen Datta
Kona, Hawaii

Fawn Helekahi-Burns
Hana, Maui

Mason Scharer
Haleakala, Maui

Kaiea Medeiros
Mauna Kahalawai,
Maui

Kaipo Kekona
Lahaina, Maui

Kilia Avelino-Purdy
Molokai

Negus Manna
Lana'i

India Clark
North Shore, Oahu

Christian Zuckerman
Wai'anae, Oahu

Ted Radovich
Waimanalo, Oahu

Vincent Kimura
Honolulu, Oahu

Natalie Urminska
Kauai

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and Members of the Senate Agriculture and Environment Committee,

The Hawaii 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. **HFUU supports SB1250.**

Building closer relationships between food banks and local farmers helps create a flexible, resilient food supply that can handle both sudden increases in demand and disruptions in imported foods. These strong connections allow food banks to quickly adjust to challenges, ensuring that communities continue to receive fresh produce even if imports are interrupted. In other words, deeper ties with local agriculture not only support local farmers but also diversify the food supply, making the system more reliable and robust against unexpected shocks.

The Hawaii Farm to Families Program, as outlined in SB1250, holds immense potential to strengthen our local food systems by fostering direct collaboration between food producers and community-based food distribution networks. By establishing this program, Hawaii can significantly alleviate food shortages while simultaneously bolstering the state's agricultural sector. This approach not only ensures a more consistent supply of nutritious, locally grown food to those in need but also provides a stable market for local farmers, encouraging sustainable agricultural practices and reducing the state's dependency on imported foods.

Moreover, the program's structure, which includes required reports to the Legislature, ensures accountability and continuous improvement. By appropriating funds to support this initiative, Hawaii is investing in a solution that not only addresses immediate food security concerns but also contributes to long-term agricultural sustainability and economic resilience. This strategic investment not only nourishes families but also nurtures the islands' agricultural communities, paving the way for a more self-sufficient and food-secure future for Hawaii.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Hunter Heavilin
Advocacy Director
Hawaii Farmers Union



P.O. Box 253, Kunia, Hawai'i 96759
Phone: (808) 848-2074; Fax: (808) 848-1921
e-mail info@hfbf.org; www.hfbf.org

February 3, 2025

HEARING BEFORE THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

TESTIMONY ON SB 1250
RELATING TO FARM TO FAMILIES

Conference Room 224 & Videoconference
1:02 PM

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice-Chair Richards, 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 1250, which establishes the Hawai'i Farm to Families Program to alleviate food shortages in the State while supporting local farmers and ranchers.

Hawai'i faces persistent food security challenges, with many families experiencing limited access to fresh, locally grown food. At the same time, local farmers and ranchers struggle with unpredictable markets and barriers to expanding food distribution. This measure presents a win-win solution by linking local food production with communities in need, ensuring that Hawai'i's agricultural products are used to feed Hawai'i's people.

SB 1250 will provide funds to Hawai'i's food banks, which support non-profit and community feeding programs by providing locally grown or produced foods to communities in need. This will help Hawai'i's farmers and ranchers while providing local nutritional food to those who need it most.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this matter.



Maui Food Bank
Nourishing Lives. Feeding Futures

February 3, 2025

RE: Support for SB 1250, Relating to Farm to Families

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and members of the committee,

On behalf of the Maui Food Bank, I express our strong support for SB 1250 Relating to Farm to Families which establishes the Hawaii Farm to Families Program to alleviate food shortages in the State. Requires reports to the Legislature prior to the Regular Sessions of 2026 and 2027.

For 30 years, Maui Food Bank has provided daily and emergency assistance to those facing food insecurity in Maui County. Maui Food Bank distributes food to families and individuals on Maui, Molokai and Lanai through direct service programs and through our network of 170 agency partners. Last year, we served an average of almost 45,000 people each month, distributing a total of 8.7 million pounds of nutritious food, including 2.3 million pounds of fresh produce. Of those served, 40% are children and youth.

SB 1250 empowers food distribution organizations to forge stronger partnerships with local farmers and food producers, ensuring that fresh, locally grown produce reaches families experiencing food insecurity. These collaborations between local farms and food organizations deliver benefits to both our communities and the economy by:

Strengthening Hawai'i's Food Supply Chain: By investing in local agriculture, we reduce our reliance on imported goods, creating a more resilient and sustainable food system for Hawai'i.

Supporting Local Farmers: This bill directly supports Hawai'i's agricultural sector, providing a reliable and fair market for local produce. Farmers gain the security of knowing their products will help nourish their neighbors and communities.

Enhancing Nutritional Access: By increasing access to fresh, local produce, this bill helps provide essential nutrients to individuals and families who may otherwise struggle to find healthy food options. This not only addresses hunger but also promotes long-term health and wellness in our communities.

The Maui Food Bank currently purchases from over 30 farmers in Maui County to provide healthy, locally grown produce. Two programs highlighting our purchasing from Maui County farms are listed below:



Maui Food Bank
Nourishing Lives. Feeding Futures

- **Fresh 4 All program:** Maui Food Bank purchases and picks up donated fresh produce from local Maui farmers, produce wholesalers, and farmers' markets for distribution to those in need, reducing physical and transportation obstacles.
- **'Ai Holo program:** Works with 15 local farmers and suppliers to deliver fresh, nutritious food to children from low-income families in Maui County, including rural areas like Hana, Molokai, and Lanai. Over 8 weeks, participants receive weekly boxes containing local produce, dairy, and proteins.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony,

Lisa H. Paulson
CEO, Maui Food Bank



1050 Bishop St. PMB 235 |
Honolulu, HI 96813
P: 808-533-1292 | e:
info@hawaiiifood.com

Executive Officers

Maile Miyashiro, C&S Wholesale Grocer, *Chair*
Kit Okimoto, Okimoto Corp., *Vice Chair*
Jayson Watts, Mahi Pono, *Secretary/Treasurer*
Lauren Zirbel, HFIA, *Executive Director*
Paul Kosasa, ABC Stores, *Advisor*
Derek Kurisu, KTA Superstores, *Advisor*
Toby Taniguchi, KTA Superstores, *Advisor*
Joe Carter, Coca-Cola Bottling of Hawaii, *Advisor*
Eddie Asato, Pint Size Hawaii, *Advisor*
Gary Okimoto, Safeway, *Immediate Past Chair*

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

DATE: February 3, 2025

TIME: 1:02pm

RE: SB1250 Relating to Farm to Families

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. Injecting state funding into our local food systems has a range of benefits. First and foremost this measure helps address the growing issue of food insecurity in our state. Far too many Hawaii families are facing food insecurity and they need your support. This measure will help provide healthy fresh food to families who utilize foodbanks in our state.

This measure also provides a consistent buyer to support our local agricultural producers. Having consistent buyers encourages growth in our local agricultural sector and helps make locally grown food more accessible and competitive for us all. This helps diversify our economy, creates agricultural jobs, and ensures that there is more local food for everyone to enjoy. This measure is good for families who will utilize it, it's good for our local farmers, it's good for our food systems, and good for Hawaii.

We believe that in order to improve food security, local food production, and resiliency in Hawaii it's vital for the State to support programs like this which support our food industry. We thank you for the opportunity to testify.



Hawaii Cattlemen's Council, Inc.

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT
Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair
Senator Herbert M. "Tim" Richards, III, Vice Chair

SB1250
RELATING TO FARM TO FAMILIES

Monday, February 3, 2025, 1:02 PM
Conference Room 224 & Videoconference

Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and Members of the Committee,

The Hawaii Cattlemen's Council **supports SB1250** which establishes the Hawaii Farm to Families Program to alleviate food shortages in the State.

Food security should be a top priority for the state – not just in the broad sense, but ensuring that each person has access to healthy food every day. Today, too many families struggle to put a square meal on the table. This bill will ensure that the DOA is focusing on relieving food shortages. It will help the many food-secure families in Hawaii, as well as support farmers and ranchers providing local, fresh food.

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. Our member ranchers represent over 60,000 head of beef cows; more than 75% of all the beef cows in the State. Ranchers are the stewards of over 750 thousand acres of land in Hawaii, or 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



Oscar Harris
Club Director
Boys & Girls Club of Hawaii
91-884 Fort Weaver Road,
Suite A. Ewa Beach, Hawaii 96706
OHarris@bgch.com
808.689.4182
November 17, 2024

To Whom It May Concern,

Aloha,

On behalf of the Hale Pono Boys and Girls Club, I am writing to express our strong support for the “Farm to Families” bill, set to be introduced during the 2025 state legislative session. This crucial initiative aligns with our commitment to serving the families and keiki of Hawai‘i by addressing food insecurity while simultaneously supporting local farmers and strengthening our agricultural economy.

As an organization dedicated to fostering the well-being of youth and families in our community, we have seen firsthand the impact that nutritious, locally grown food has on the lives of those we serve. Access to fresh produce not only improves physical health but also enhances emotional and mental well-being, paving the way for stronger, more resilient communities. The “Farm to Families” bill promises to bridge the gap between local farmers and food-insecure families by creating a sustainable solution that benefits all of Hawai‘i.

We urge state legislators to prioritize funding for this initiative. By doing so, they will be making a meaningful investment in Hawai‘i’s future—one that uplifts both our agricultural industry and the families who rely on these essential resources.

Thank you for considering our testimony. We stand ready to support the “Farm to Families” bill in any way we can and look forward to seeing this transformative legislation come to fruition in 2025.

Mahalo nui loa,

Sincerely,
Oscar Harris
Club Director Boys & Girls Club of Hawaii



**Hale Pono Ewa Beach
Clubhouse**

91-884 Fort Weaver Rd. Suite A
Ewa Beach Hawaii 96706
Tel: 808.689.4182
Fax: 808.689.0625
www.bgch.com

Board of Directors

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Joni Young

Clubhouse Director

Oscar Harris Jr.

President & CEO

Paddy Kauhane

GREAT FUTURES STARTS **HERE.**



December 1, 2024

Aloha!

My name is Anthony Seyko and I manage the Food for Friends Ohana Distribution at the First Assembly of God Central Oahu Church in Wahiawa. Our church is one of the many agencies supported by the Hawaii Food Bank, Inc.

I am writing this letter to urgently ask for your support of the “Farm to Families” bill, a pivotal piece of legislation that has the potential to transform our state’s food security landscape. This bill will allow food distributing organizations to strengthen their partnerships with local farmers and food producers, ensuring that fresh, locally grown produce reaches families facing food insecurity.

Families in our communities and our economy can benefit greatly through the partnership between local farms and food organizations as follows:

1. **Strengthening the Food Supply Chain of the State of Hawaii:** By investing in local agriculture, we reduce our dependence on imported goods, creating a more resilient and sustainable food system for Hawaii.
2. **Supporting Local Farmers:** The bill offers a direct benefit to Hawaii’s agricultural sector, providing a steady and fair market for local produce. Farmers can plan for future growth knowing their products will feed their neighbors in need.
3. **Enhancing Nutritional Access:** Fresh, local produce provides essential nutrients to individuals and families who may otherwise lack access to healthy food options. This not only fights hunger but also promotes long-term health and wellness in our communities.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to our shared vision of a thriving, food-secure Hawaii. I am deeply grateful for your consideration of this important legislation and stand ready to collaborate with you in any way that may be helpful.

Thank you,


Anthony Seyko

First Assembly of God Central Oahu
Food Program Manager



91-1440 Farrington Hwy. Kapolei, HI 96707

Phone: (808) 677-9516 Fax: (808) 677-9202

December 26, 2024

Aloha!

My Name is James DeJesus III, I am the Sales Director for Fresh Aloha Direct.

I'm writing to support the "Farm to Families" Bill. To help strengthen our community food systems, making a more consistent market for local farmers and food producers.

- **Enhancing Nutritional Access:** Fresh, local produce provides essential nutrients to individuals and families who may otherwise lack access to healthy food options. This not only fights hunger but also promotes long-term health and wellness in our communities.
- **Strengthening Hawaii's Food Supply Chain:** By investing in local agriculture, we reduce our dependence on imported goods, creating a more resilient and sustainable food system for Hawaii.
- **Supporting Local Farmers:** The bill offers a direct benefit to Hawaii's agricultural sector, providing a steady and fair market for local produce. Farmers can plan for future growth knowing their products will feed their neighbors in need.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to our shared vision of a thriving, food-secure Hawaii. I am deeply grateful for your consideration of this important legislation and stand ready to collaborate with you in any way that may be helpful.

Thank you,
James DeJesus III
Honolulu, Hawaii
Director of Sales



November 17, 2024

Aloha:

I am testifying on behalf of Giving Hope Hawaii.

I support the Hawaii farm to food bank program and Hawaii food assistance program special fund to alleviate food shortages in the State.

Without the help and partnership with Hawai'i Foodbank, Giving Hope Hawaii would not be able to feed over 5400 families a month suffering from food insecurity. Since January 2023 we have be able to service families, kupuna's and children with special needs from Waimanalo to Kahuku. Our pantry could not do this without the support from Hawaii Food Bank along with the Hawaii farm to food bank program.

With Hawaii Foodbanks continued support and to get more food we can certainly stomp out food hunger in all our communities.

Our mission is simple: **To give glory to God and to promote human dignity.** Through the tireless efforts of our staff, volunteers, and corporate partners, we provide food and support to the hungry and needy on Oahu's Windward Side especially our Kūpuna and Keiki with special needs.

"For I was hungry and you fed me. For I was thirsty and you gave me a drink. For I was a stranger and you invited me into your home. For I was naked and you clothed me. For I was sick and you cared for me. For I was in prison and you visited me."

Mahalo for your consideration.

Aloha,
Violette Nacapoy
Chief of Operations, Director
Giving Hope Hawaii

Nov 18, 2024

Aloha!

My name is Esther Balsamo and I am the lead volunteer for Sunset Beach Christian Church's houseless outreach, Hands of Hope.

I am writing to express my concern for our home. So many are struggling to acquire enough food every day. Even those who have jobs, and homes come by asking for help. Therefore, I am urgently requesting your support of the "Farm to Families" bill, a pivotal piece of legislation that has the potential to completely transform the lives of the people in my community.

The partnership between farms and food organizations will benefit so many families in our community. It would also strengthen Hawaii's food supply chain, support local farmers, and increase access to nutritional foods. Making our home filled with more healthy and happy individuals.

Ending hunger in Hawai'i is important to me. Because every week for the last four years I have sat and talked with those who do not know when their next meal will be. These people are so kind, and generous even with the little that they have. And I would like nothing more than to see their suffering eased.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to our shared vision of a thriving, food-secure Hawai'i. I am deeply grateful for your consideration of this important legislation and stand ready to collaborate with you in any way that may be helpful.

Thank you,

Esther Balsamo

Haleiwa

Hands of Hope Lead Volunteer



12/1/2025

Re: Testimony in Strong Support of Hawai'i Farm to Families Program

REDUCING HARM,
PROMOTING HEALTH,
CREATING WELLNESS,
AND FIGHTING STIGMA
IN HAWAII AND
THE PACIFIC

To Whom it May concern:

The Hawai'i Health & Harm Reduction Center (HHRC) strongly supports the Hawai'i Farm to Families Program. This initiative is a vital step toward alleviating food insecurity across our islands while also supporting local agricultural producers.

Food insecurity remains one of Hawai'i's most pressing challenges. The economic disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic amplified this issue, and while the immediate crisis has passed, many families continue to struggle with access to fresh and healthy foods. This program would ensure a consistent supply of culturally relevant, locally grown food to food banks and communities in need, addressing the dual goals of improving food security and boosting the local economy.

HHRC's mission is to reduce harm, promote health, create wellness, and fight stigma in Hawai'i and the Pacific. We focus our efforts on communities disproportionately affected by social determinants of health, including but not limited to people living with HIV, hepatitis, and substance use, as well as LGBTQIA+, Native Hawaiian, and houseless populations.

During the height of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021, HHRC collaborated with the Hawai'i Food Bank to distribute over 500,000 pounds of food to thousands of families. These experiences underscored the urgent need for food banks to have access to fresh, healthy, and locally sourced foods beyond what is provided through donations. This program will empower food banks to meet these needs sustainably while supporting local farmers and food producers.

Hawai'i Farm to Families Program represents an opportunity to create a win-win scenario for Hawai'i: reducing food insecurity, strengthening our local agricultural economy, and ensuring the well-being of our most vulnerable communities.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in strong support of this important measure.

Andrew Ogata
Director of Marketing and Development
Hawai'i Health & Harm Reduction Center

HAWAII HEALTH
& HARM REDUCTION
CENTER

677 Ala Moana Blvd.
Suite 226
Honolulu, HI 96813

(808) 521-2437

www.hhhrc.org

December 11, 2024

Aloha!

My name is Damiana Espiritu and I am the Food Pantry coordinator of Immaculate Conception Church in Ewa Beach.

I'm writing in support of the "Farm to Families" bill. A pivotal piece of legislation that has the potential to transform our state's food security landscape. This bill will allow food distributing organizations to strengthen their partnerships with local farmers and food producers, ensuring that fresh, locally grown produce reaches families facing food insecurity.

The partnership between local farms and food organizations benefits families in our communities and our economy. We reduce our dependence on imported goods and create a more sustainable food system for Hawai'i by investing in local agriculture. The bill offers a direct benefit to Hawai'i's agricultural sector by providing a steady and fair market for local produce. Farmers can plan for future growth knowing their products will feed their neighbors in need. Fresh, local produce provides essential nutrients to individuals and families who may otherwise lack access to healthy food options. This not only fights hunger but also promotes long-term health and wellness in our communities.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to our shared vision of a thriving, food-secure Hawai'i. I am deeply grateful for your consideration of this important legislation.

Thank you,

Damiana Espiritu
Ewa Beach, Oahu



January 15, 2025

Aloha Hawai'i policy leaders!

My name is Charla Teves, and I am a lifelong resident of Nu'uano. I am currently attending college in New York, which has only heightened my awareness of the intense need for my home state to address the pervasive and persistent need to end hunger. I am writing in **STRONG SUPPORT** of the "Farm-to-Families" bill.

This bill will strengthen the Hawai'i food supply chain, reduce the state's dependency on imported goods and create a much more resilient and sustainable food system. Importantly, it will directly benefit farmers, providing a steady and fair market for local produce. Farmers can plan for future growth knowing their products will feed their neighbors in need.

In 2024, I was named one of five national Stephen J. Brady Scholars by the Sodexo Stop Hunger Foundation. I was invited to participate in a national conference where I learned about innovative programs across the country to help end hunger. Supporting the distribution of fresh local produce will help ensure that essential nutrients are available to children and families who may otherwise lack access to healthy food options. This not only fights hunger but also promotes long-term health and wellness in our communities.

One in five Hawaii children struggle with hunger, according to Feeding America. At more than 55,000 children, they would fill the Stan Sheriff Center four times over and still overflow into the parking lot. I have volunteered with many food drives and in other ways to help end hunger. Based on these experiences, I know for sure that your support of food banks in Hawai'i will make a difference.

Thank you for the opportunity to share with you my support and please pass the Farm-to-Families bill.

Mahalo,

Charla Teves

Charlene Hosenfeld, Ph.D.

604 N. KALAHEO AVE., UNIT A, KAILUA, HI 96734
TEL 808 261 4305



January 15, 2025

Aloha,

I am a long-time resident of Kailua, O'ahu, and am writing in support of the "Farm to Families" bill. As a psychologist I am aware of the importance of good nutrition for both physical and psychological well-being.

This legislation would have a positive impact on multiple crucial areas in Hawai'i by:

- providing fresh and nutritional food to individuals and families who lack financial resources to access healthy food;
- supporting our local farmers; &
- decreasing our State's dependence on imported food.

The is a Win - Win - Win.

Mahalo nui loa for your leadership and efforts to create a more food secure, nutrition equatable, farmer supportive and thriving Hawai'i.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in brown ink that reads "Charlene Hosenfeld PhD". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Charlene Hosenfeld

January 15, 2025

Aloha!

My name is Curstyn Yoshimoto and I am a Communications Coordinator at Hawai'i Foodbank. I am writing with an urgent request for support of the "Farm to Families" Bill, which will allow more local produce into the hands of families in need, facilitated by organizations like Hawai'i Foodbank.

In a state so heavily reliant on imports, this bill will allow us to be more self-sufficient through supporting local farmers, while also moving us toward a more sustainable local food system. With these fresh fruits and vegetables coming from local farmers, recipients of these items will receive them at their freshest and most nutritious – when they would otherwise lose out on access to healthier options due to their circumstances. With this Farm to Families program available, families in need will be able to break the cycle of depending on unhealthy and processed food, leading to better health and wellness in the long run.

I grew up fortunate to have a roof over my head and food on my plate, but I know that far too many of my neighbors and friends can't say the same. After I started to work at Hawai'i Foodbank, I realized that the need is even greater than I could've imagined, and many of those who are struggling to make ends meet are those you'd least expect.

Hawai'i's geographical isolation makes it impossible for imported produce to reach us at peak freshness. We must inspect produce in grocery stores carefully – because they often almost go bad by the time they reach our shelves. Nutritious foods should not be a luxury, and I believe we can and should become more self-sustaining in our food system, especially in a place that has historically been a bounty of fresh local food.

I believe that funding Farm to Families will allow us to not only uplift and support our local farms and allow for those in need to be properly fed, but also allow us to become more connected to the food we eat – linking us more to those who cared for and nurtured this land for centuries. In a place that has in many ways been stripped of its culture, I believe that doing our kuleana to feed those in need with food grown in our own backyard is a step in the right direction of reclaiming what has been lost.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to our shared vision of a thriving, food-secure Hawai'i. I am deeply grateful for your consideration of this important legislation and stand ready to collaborate with you in any way that may be helpful.

Mahalo,

Curstyn Yoshimoto

'Ewa Beach, Hawai'i

November 19, 2024

Greetings!

My name is Edward Van Houten and I am a retired IT Specialist from Wahiawa.

Living in an economy that is consistently ranked as the most expensive state in the United States due in part to high food costs can be challenging for the vast majority of us here in Hawaii. It is for this reason that I'm reaching out to vehemently urge you to support the "Farm to Families" bill, a crucial piece of legislation with the power to significantly improve food security across our state.

Families in need in our communities, as well as our economy, benefit by an effective partnership between local farms and food organizations in a number of ways:

1. **Enhancing Hawai'i's Food Supply Chain:** Investing in local agriculture reduces reliance on imported goods, fostering a more resilient and sustainable food system for Hawai'i.
2. **Supporting Local Farmers:** This bill directly benefits Hawai'i's agricultural sector by ensuring a stable and fair market for local produce. It empowers farmers to plan for growth, knowing their harvests will nourish neighbors in need.
3. **Enhancing Nutritional Access:** Providing fresh, local produce ensures individuals and families have access to essential nutrients, combating hunger while fostering long-term health and wellness in our communities.

My wife and I have known families with children, as well as Kapuna in our community that have been forced out of their homes due to the rising cost of living here in Hawaii. We are volunteers in our community to share out food in anyway we can receive it, from food distribution outreaches to near-expiration/at-expiration food from local grocery stores. The need is always there, as well as the expressed appreciation from those who receive the food.

Mahalo nui loa for your leadership and commitment to our shared vision of a thriving, food-secure Hawai'i. I am deeply grateful for your consideration of this important legislation and stand ready to collaborate with you in any way that may be helpful.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Edward Van Houten".

January 15, 2025

Aloha!

My name is Gail McElrath. I was born and raised on Oahu and appreciate the Ohana that this Island signifies. It is a beautiful place to call home, but the cost of living has skyrocketed over the last decade making fresh, healthy food harder to obtain for many families. Because of this, I am writing with an “urgent request for your support of the "Farm to Families" bill –a pivotal piece of legislation that has the potential to transform our state’s food security landscape.” This bill will allow food distributing organizations to strengthen their partnerships with local farmers and food producers, ensuring that fresh, locally grown produce reaches families facing food insecurity.

This partnership between local farms and food organizations benefits families in our communities and our economy. By investing in local agriculture, we reduce our dependence on imported goods, creating a more resilient and sustainable food system for Hawai‘i.

The bill also offers a direct benefit to Hawai‘i’s agricultural sector, providing a steady and fair market for local produce. The support of Local Farmers allows them to plan for future growth knowing their products are needed and can be available to feed their neighbors in need.

With so many people living on unhealthy, processed fast foods, the availability of fresh, local produce will help to provide essential nutrients to those individuals and families who may otherwise lack access to healthier food options. This not only fights hunger but also promotes long-term health and wellness in our communities.

I volunteer at the Hawai‘i Foodbank because I believe that this is a fundamental need for the people on this Island. Working side by side with the numerous volunteers, who share in this cause, is a wonderful experience. Seeing the very generous donations of food arriving daily at this facility, and everyone working so diligently to ensure that this food gets to where it is needed most puts a smile on my face every time. No one should go hungry.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to our shared vision of a thriving, food-secure Hawai‘i. I am deeply grateful for your consideration of this important legislation and stand ready to collaborate with you in any way that may be helpful.

Thank you,

Gail McElrath
Waikele, Hawai‘i

December 6, 2024

SUBJECT: Support “Farm to Families” Bill

Aloha!

My name is Jody Smith. I am a retiree with 18 years of experience with the sustainable agriculture program at UH Manoa College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources. I regularly donate to and volunteer with the Hawai'i Food Bank. I help out with the Food 4 Keiki Program, the CSFP Kupuna Food Box Program, and the food distribution program operated by Kings Cathedral in Aina Haina.

As a HFB volunteer, I unpack boxes and boxes of beautiful fruits and produce grown by our local farmers. I help fill and hand out bags of vegetables. I enjoy watching our local clients growing excited by the variety and selection of popular vegetables (like bok choy, daikon, bitter melon) and local tropical fruits (papaya, pineapple) — the flavors of our islands. The partnership between the Hawaii Food Bank and the Hawaii Farm Bureau has allowed us to distribute this delicious and nourishing fresh produce.

Continuation and expansion of this program via the "Farm to Families" bill will bring multiple benefits to our state.

Please provide full support for the the "Farm to Families" bill, a pivotal piece of legislation that has the potential to transform our state's food security landscape. This bill will allow food distributing organizations to strengthen their partnerships with local farmers and food producers, ensuring that fresh, locally grown produce reaches families facing food insecurity.

As a former agricultural professional in Hawaii, I understand the importance of growing, purchasing and distributing locally grown foods.

Investing in local agriculture reduces the state's dependence on imported food (now estimated at 85% — extraordinarily high).

With a reliable market for their produce, Hawaii's farmers are better able to plan for and supply delicious and nutritious food.

Fresh, local produce provides essential nutrients to individuals and families who may otherwise lack access to healthy food options, fighting hunger and promoting long-term health and wellness in our communities.

Please support the "Farm to Families" bill.

Mahalo nui loa

Jody Smith
Honolulu 96825

My name is John Heidel and I am a retired Christian minister and a 50 year resident of Kailua; coming to Hawai'i in 1962 I served as the Minister of Youth at Central Union Church for 5 years and Chaplain at Punahou School for 32 years until retirement in 2001. In addition, I helped John Whitek start the Hawai'i People's Fund in 1968 and Kent Coarsey start Family Promise Hawai'i in 2004. I also helped start The Interfaith Alliance Hawai'i in 2002 (serving as President from 2004-2012) and founded Religious Leaders for Assisted Dying in 2002. I'm closely affiliated with Christ Church, Uniting Disciples of Christ and Presbyterians in Kailua. In retirement I have continued my advocacy for interfaith cooperation and social justice activism.

I am writing this letter because of my support for the Hawai'i Food Bank's proposed bill for the 2025 Legislative session - "Farm to Families". Being raised on an organic farm in Southern Idaho, I know from experience (and healthy eating) exactly what it means to have nutritious food available. This legislation if enacted, will not only strengthen the food supply chain in Hawai'i but will contribute greatly to the improvement of the essential nutritional quality of the food provided to all island residents; plus, it will assist our local farmers immensely,

I'm grateful for all the good work you do as our elected officials but am particularly thankful for the consideration you'll give to this legislation. Please call me if you have any questions. Mahalo nui loa!!

Aloha no,
Rev. Dr. John R. Heidel
1341 Manu Mele Street
Kailua, HI 96734
808-261-4585

Joseph Keawe‘aimoku Kaholokula, PhD
Clinical Health Psychologist, Health Equity Scientist, & Academician



555 South Street, Unit 1205
Honolulu, Hawai‘i 96813
808-221-2481
kaholoku@hawaii.edu

January 15, 2025

Re: Support for the "Farm to Families" bill

Aloha nui,

I am Dr. Keawe‘aimoku Kaholokula, a Hawai‘i licensed clinical psychologist and professor and chair of Native Hawaiian Health at the John A. Burns School of Medicine, University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa.

As a health disparities researcher, I know firsthand the negative impact food insecurity has on the health and well-being of people in Hawai‘i, especially among Native Hawaiians, Pacific Islanders, and other medically underserved populations. This is why I am writing with **an urgent request for your support of the "Farm to Families" bill, a pivotal piece of legislation that has the potential to transform our state’s food security landscape.** This bill will allow food-distributing organizations to strengthen their partnerships with local farmers and food producers, ensuring that fresh, locally grown produce reaches families facing food insecurity.

The partnership between local farms and food organizations benefits families in our communities and our economy in several ways. First, it **strengthens Hawai‘i’s food supply chain** by investing in local agriculture thereby reducing our dependence on imported goods and creating a more resilient and sustainable food system for Hawai‘i. Second, by **supporting local farmers** there can be a direct benefit to Hawai‘i’s agricultural sector, providing a steady and fair market for local produce. Farmers can plan for future growth knowing their products will feed their neighbors in need. Finally, by **enhancing nutritional access**, fresh, local produce will provide essential nutrients to individuals and families who may otherwise lack access to healthy food options. This bill will help fight hunger and promote long-term health and wellness in our communities.

Mahalo nui for your leadership and commitment to our shared vision of a thriving, food-secure Hawai‘i. I am deeply grateful for your consideration of this important legislation and stand ready to collaborate with you in any way that may be helpful.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, enclosed in a thin black rectangular box. The signature is written in a cursive style and appears to read "Joseph K. Kaholokula".

Joseph Keawe‘aimoku Kaholokula, Ph.D.

January 15, 2025

Aloha,

I hope you are well! My name is Molly Mamaril and I am a Kaimuki resident and I work for a local nonprofit that supports community-based economic development for Hawaii.

I am writing with an urgent request for your support of the "Farm to Families" bill, a pivotal piece of legislation that has the potential to transform our state's food security landscape.

This bill will allow food distributing organizations to strengthen their partnerships with local farmers and food producers, ensuring that fresh, locally grown produce reaches families facing food insecurity.

Collaboration between local farms and food organizations benefits families in our communities and our economy in several ways, including:

- **Enhancing Nutritional Access:** fresh, local produce provides essential nutrients to individuals and families who may otherwise lack access to healthy food options. This not only prevents hunger but also promotes long-term health and wellness in our communities.
- **Strengthening Hawai'i's Food Supply Chain** by investing in local agriculture, we reduce our dependence on imported goods, creating a more resilient and sustainable food system.
- **Supporting Local Farmers:** The bill offers a direct benefit to Hawai'i's agricultural sector, providing a steady and fair market for local produce. Farmers can plan for future growth knowing their products will feed their neighbors in need.

Over the past few years, I have volunteered with the Hawaii Foodbank several times in order to support food access for those who are in greater need. It is incredibly powerful to see the strong ecosystem of volunteers and staff that the Hawaii Foodbank has grown over time. There are so many kind and enthusiastic people who want to help support other residents in having their basic needs met, allowing everyone to pursue their higher purpose because they're not stuck in the cycle of trying to survive.

Mahalo nui for your leadership and commitment to our shared vision of a thriving, food-secure Hawai'i. I am grateful for your consideration of this important legislation and stand ready to collaborate with you in any way that may be helpful.

Sincerely,

Molly Mamaril

Aloha,

I am writing with an urgent request for the Farm to Families bill to be passed. While I'm in my late 40s and no longer facing an income or food shortage, I grew up on welfare and was reliant upon food banks and other community resources. I never learned the value of eating/cooking fresh fruits and vegetables, because we survived on canned or boxed goods (processed foods). Those in poverty shouldn't be lacking healthy food choices. Food is healing and if they have more healthy options available, it will in turn prevent many chronic diseases which cost the state lots of money.

Because we live in Hawaii, it's even more important that we not only provide healthy food options for lower income families, it's also important to support local farmers. Local farmers make very little money and most of their produce goes to waste. This is really unfortunate. I would love to support local farmers, who work hard at providing healthy food for us. We should be moving toward Hawaii becoming more sustainable and independent. It would be wonderful if: (1) those in poverty were healthy, saving the state costly medical expenses, (2) Hawaii was sustainable and didn't need imported food, and (3) we supported our hard-working local farmers.

Thank you for your consideration.

Nicky B.

Mililani

December 19, 2024

Aloha!

My name is Pamela Clifford and I am a lifelong resident on O'ahu. I also work at a ranch in Waialua and support farmers on the ranch who are struggling to survive. Food security is something that is so critical for our community. We are isolated in the middle of the Pacific ocean and import a tremendous amount of food for our families. I would like this letter to show support of the "Farm to Families" bill. We need to help secure consistent markets for local food producers. We need to ensure that fresh, locally grown produce can reach families across the island. There are too many families that are struggling with food insecurity and we need to do our part. It is critical that we invest in our local agriculture! We need to not be so reliant on importing food when it can be grown here! Our farmers need our support! Our families need our support! Children are unable to think, process, and mature without the nutrients needed. I have seen first hand (as a former elementary teacher) how children who haven't had enough food struggle in school. Also, I have seen how when they are able to grow the food, they are more willing and open to try different types of food. Having school gardens is one way to increase the variety of healthy foods the kids eat as well as teach them about where their food comes from.

It is vital that we take care of our families and communities. Farmers need more support. We need to prioritize our self sustainability by growing our own food and getting it to our communities!

Thank you for considering the piece of legislation that could have a positive impact on our community.

Mahalo
Pam Clifford

Aloha,

My name is Samlynn Moore and I'm a mom of three, a volunteer in my church and worked most of my adult life. I'm writing in support of the "Farm to Families" bill. One of our ministries is providing both hot meals and canned goods and perishables that we receive through the Hawaii Food Bank. We prepare, through our certified kitchen, meals that we deliver to the homes of families who struggle to put food on their table. The joy and smiles on the keikis facing each time we arrive is heartfelt.

This past Saturday we delivered to a home in Waianae and the mother of the home said, "If it weren't for you folks we wouldn't have a Christmas. "

I worked as a Cadre with the Hawaii Youth Challenge Academy and have seen a male cadet cry because he received 3 square meals a day knowing his family at home was struggling. Many cadets stated they had never eaten so much until attending the academy. I've had three cadets ask me privately if our church could deliver to their families.

Our opio will never show it or talk about how hungry they are or how their families are struggling. This bill will help ensure families are fed and their children won't have to go to school hungry. They won't have to worry how they will eat over the weekend when school is not in session. This bill is vital to Hawaii's food insecurities.

Mahalo

Samlynn Moore

January 15, 2025

Aloha!

My name is Timothy Blaisdell, and I am an Investment Services professional who works in downtown Honolulu.

In these challenging times I have decided to step forward and request your support of the "Farm to Families" bill, a pivotal piece of legislation that has the potential to transform our state's food security landscape. I believe this bill will allow food distributing organizations to strengthen their partnerships with local farmers and food producers, ensuring that fresh, locally grown produce reaches families facing food insecurity.

The partnership between local farms and food organizations benefits families in our communities and our economy in many ways:

1. **Strengthening Hawai'i's Food Supply Chain:** By investing in local agriculture, we reduce our dependence on imported goods, creating a more resilient and sustainable food system for Hawai'i.
2. **Supporting Local Farmers:** The bill offers a direct benefit to Hawai'i's agricultural sector, providing a steady and fair market for local produce. Farmers can plan for future growth knowing their products will feed their neighbors in need.
3. **Enhancing Nutritional Access:** Fresh, local produce provides essential nutrients to individuals and families who may otherwise lack access to healthy food options. This not only fights hunger but also promotes long-term health and wellness in our communities.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to our shared vision of a thriving, food-secure Hawai'i. I am deeply grateful for your consideration of this important legislation and stand ready to collaborate with you in any way that may be helpful.

Mahalo,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Timothy Blaisdell". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Timothy Blaisdell
Aiea, Hawai'i



December 1, 2024

Aloha,

I am writing to express my strong support for the “Farm to Families” bill, a crucial piece of legislation that will transform our local food ecosystem. As the Executive Director of Alternative Structures International dba Kahumana, I have witnessed firsthand the profound impact this bill could have on our community.

This legislation represents a strategic approach to addressing food security and agricultural sustainability in Hawai'i. By creating a direct connection between local farmers and families in need, the bill offers multiple significant benefits:

1. **Local Food System Resilience:** The bill will dramatically reduce Hawai'i's reliance on imported food by investing in our local agricultural infrastructure. This approach creates a more stable and sustainable food supply that can better withstand external disruptions.
2. **Economic Support for Local Agriculture:** By establishing a consistent market for local produce, the bill provides farmers with economic stability and predictability. This support allows agricultural businesses to plan for growth and invest in their operations, knowing they have a reliable outlet for their products.
3. **Nutritional Equity and Community Health:** The legislation ensures that fresh, locally grown produce reaches families facing food insecurity. By prioritizing access to high-quality, nutrient-rich foods, we are not just addressing hunger but actively promoting long-term community wellness.

Your leadership in considering this bill demonstrates a commitment to Hawai'i's future. I am deeply appreciative of your efforts to create a more food-secure, economically robust, and healthy community for all residents.

Mahalo,

Avary Maunakea
Executive Director
Alternative Structures International
dba Kahumana

Date: November 25, 2024

Greetings,

My name is Roy Nakamura and I lead the Food Distribution at Kalihi Union Church.

I am very concerned about the need to provide healthy food options for the families in our community. Nutritious foods are not always available for many of our recipients due to multiple reasons but I basically think it is due to the cost. Many families are not eating healthy which allow them to keep and stay.

We ask for your support for the "Farm to Family's" legislation. This support will to provide produce for these families that will in turn provide support that to the farmers and families allowing them both to thrive.

Local farms and food organizations, can work together to provide a necessary source of produce to those in need.

We need farms. They are essential a resource that assist with the food insecurities and a healthy community.

Whenever we distribute goods to our recipients, they are very grateful to receive produce and tell us about what they plan to make using the produce provided. Please support the legislation and make a difference!

Thank you,
Roy Nakamura
Lead- Kalihi Union Church(Manna Program)



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Travis Y. Kuwahara
Ryan D. Louie
Zachary K. Shikada
Timothy T. Silvester
Reece Y. Tanaka

November 26, 2024

Aloha!

My name is Craig Shikuma, and I am a partner at the law firm of Kobayashi Sugita & Goda. I am writing today with an urgent request for your support of the "Farm to Families" bill—a crucial piece of legislation that can reshape Hawai‘i’s food security and foster a healthier, more self-reliant future for our state.

This bill is pivotal in creating stronger connections between food distribution organizations and local farmers, ensuring that fresh, locally grown produce reaches families who are struggling with food insecurity. Its impact extends beyond providing nourishment; it strengthens our communities and bolsters our local economy.

The partnerships fostered by this bill have the potential to bring immense benefits to Hawai‘i, including:

- 1. Reinforcing Hawai‘i’s Food Supply Chain:** Investing in local agriculture reduces reliance on imported goods, making our food system more resilient to external disruptions while supporting sustainability.
- 2. Empowering Local Farmers:** By establishing a reliable and fair market for their produce, this bill offers farmers the security to plan and grow their operations, directly benefiting our agricultural sector and ensuring their hard work feeds their fellow residents.
- 3. Improving Access to Nutritious Food:** Fresh, local fruits and vegetables play a critical role in combating hunger and promoting long-term health. The benefits of a diet that

November 25, 2024

Page 2

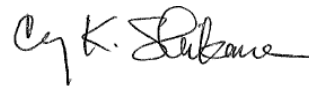
includes fresh food, rather than only processed or canned items, are invaluable to everyone, especially Hawaii's underserved population. Those benefits extend to all facets of a person's well-being, not just combating hunger.

Food insecurity, including not being able to afford fresh vegetables and fruits, impacts every aspect of a person's life, from physical health to emotional well-being. Every Hawaii resident should have access to enough healthy food. By addressing hunger, we strengthen the foundation of our communities and ensure that all families have the opportunity to thrive.

I urge you to join me in supporting this transformative initiative. Together, we can help create a Hawai'i where no one has to go hungry, and where our local farmers thrive in a resilient, sustainable food system.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Craig K. Shikuma". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath it.

Craig Shikuma



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CENTER**

HAWAII

KrocCenterHawaii.org

**THE SALVATION ARMY RAY & JOAN
KROC CORPS COMMUNITY CENTER**

91-3257 Kualakai Parkway

Ewa Beach, HI 96706

Main: (808) 682-5505

Fax: (808) 682-5501

To whom it may concern,

Re: Support for the Farm to Families Bill

My name is Leslie Moody, and I am the Family Services Manager at The Salvation Army Ray and Joan Kroc Corps Community Center in Hawaii. I am writing to express my staunch support for the proposed Farm to Families legislative bill, which seeks to strengthen the connection between local farmers and families in need by providing greater access to fresh, healthy, and locally grown foods. We desperately need to strengthen the food supply chain for our individuals and families facing food insecurity.

As the Family Services Manager, I have witnessed firsthand the critical importance of fostering a sustainable and equitable food system. The Farm to Families initiative would not only support local agriculture by creating reliable markets for small- and mid-sized farms, but it would also ensure that underserved communities have access to nutritious and affordable food options.

The cost of living in Hawaii is above most of the nation and the increase in food prices since the pandemic has created an added financial strain on many households. One out of every three families are struggling to keep food on the table. The children and the elderly are suffering the most.

Hawaii is one of the most isolated places on the planet. Having so many of our food sources imported places us in a very vulnerable position. Should there be a natural disaster or another pandemic this could be catastrophic. In addition to addressing food insecurity, this legislation promotes environmental sustainability and economic development by reducing food miles and supporting local economies. These benefits align with the values of health, community resilience, and environmental stewardship that we all strive to uphold.

I urge you and your colleagues to prioritize the passage of this critical bill. It is imperative to so many and represents an opportunity to invest in the well-being of families and farmers alike while advancing a more equitable food system.

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General William Booth, Founder • General Brian Peddle, General • Commissioner Douglas Riley, Territorial Commander

Major Troy Trimmer, Divisional Commander • Major Osei Stewart, Corps Officer & Hawaii State Capitol Liaison • Major Lynn A. Stewart, Corps Officer

Thank you for your leadership on this issue. I would be happy to discuss this matter further or provide additional information about the impact of this initiative.

Sincerely,

Leslie Moody

Family Services Manager/Kroc Cares Dept.

The Salvation Army Ray & Joan Kroc Corps Community Center

91-3257 Kualaka'i Parkway

Ewa Beach, Hawaii 96706

Direct Line: 693-8307 | Fax 693-8407

Leslie.Moody@usw.salvationarmy.org

www.KrocCenterHawaii.org

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General William Booth, Founder • General Brian Peddle, General • Commissioner Douglas Riley, Territorial Commander

Major Phil Lum, Divisional Commander • Major Osei Stewart, Corps Officer & Hawaii State Capitol Liaison • Major Lynn A. Stewart, Corps Officer



PO Box 474
Haleiwa HI, 96712
808-228-8865
info@lokoeafarms.com
www.lokoeafarms.com

January 15, 2025

Aloha! My name is Noe Neumann and I am the owner/operator at Lokoea Farms. We are a second generation family farm in Haleiwa and we grow citrus and tropical fruit for local consumption.

My family and I are writing to support the "Farm to Families" bill, a critical piece of legislation that will help secure a consistent market for local food producers, strengthening our community food systems and ensuring that fresh, locally grown produce reaches families facing food insecurity.

As a small family farm, we rely on the Hawaii Food Bank every year during our heaviest harvest season for our Haleiwa Gold Hawaiian Oranges. We sell oranges and other tropical fruit throughout the year through other channels such as Farm Link Hawaii, but during the fall/winter months we have a huge amount of oranges that our normal buyers can't handle. The Hawaii Food Bank has been stepping in every year since 2020 to purchase and distribute these delicious locally grown oranges to local families.

The partnership between our local farm and food organizations such as the Food Bank benefits families in our communities and our economy by:

1. **Strengthening Hawai'i's Food Supply Chain:** By investing in our small family farm, the Food Bank helps reduce Hawaii's dependence on imported goods, creating a more resilient and sustainable food system for Hawai'i.
2. **Supporting Local Farmers:** The bill offers a direct benefit to Hawai'i's agricultural sector, which will help the Food Bank continue providing a steady and fair market for our local oranges. Knowing that we have a market for our larger harvests allows us to plan for future growth knowing our fruit will feed our neighbors in need.
3. **Enhancing Nutritional Access:** Fresh, local produce provides essential nutrients to individuals and families who may otherwise lack access to healthy food options. This not only fights hunger but also promotes long-term health and wellness in our communities. You can't get better oranges than our fresh, juicy, sweet Haleiwa Gold Hawaiian Oranges!

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to our shared vision of a thriving, food-secure Hawai'i. I am deeply grateful for your consideration of this important legislation and stand ready to collaborate with you in any way that may be helpful.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "G. Noe Neumann". The letters are cursive and fluidly connected.

G. Noe Neumann
808-228-8865
info@lokoeafarms.com

To: Hawaii State House of Representatives

RE: Farm to Family Bill: (HB2137 from the 2024 session)

For the reestablishment and funding to pass this bill in 2025

November 19, 2024

Dear Representatives of the State of Hawaii House of Representatives,

My name is Laverne Suster and I am the coordinator and point of contact for the OLPH Church Pantry in Ewa Beach, Hawaii. Our pantry serves about 720 people each month with food collected by the Church community, as well as food from Hawaii Food Bank.

Food security has long been recognized as a major issue in Hawaii because Hawaii relies on shipments of food from the mainland. Anything we can do to become more reliant on our own farms for food will go a long way to establish this self-reliance. As we all know, shipping in food from outside the state drives up the cost of food for the people of Hawaii. As a result, many of our people are experiencing **food insecurity**. With this bill, **food security** becomes a little more of a reality.

Many aspects of the Farm to Families program promise benefits for our economy and our people. Our people will enjoy healthier choices of fresh food grown right here in Hawaii. Local farmers benefit as we put our money into their farms, securing their jobs and livelihood. Full circle farming adds to the benefits and the symbiotic relationship from farmers to food bank, back to farmers; from the growing of food to the composting of food materials the food bank cannot use. All of these benefits make this program a moral choice because excess food is not wasted; it's *ethically and morally sound*.

Food security is a huge issue, especially in these uncertain times. This bill will go a long way to helping the people of this state, your constituents, make sure they will always have a "next meal". Please re-establish and vote for this bill.

Laverne Suster

OLPH Food Ministry Pantry



Our Lady of Sorrows Church

1403-A California Ave.
Wahiawa, HI 96786

November 18, 2024

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is being submitted to support the “Farms to Families” bill for 2025 state legislative session.

At Our Lady of Sorrows Parish in Wahiawa, our food pantry relies on the Hawaii Foodbank for well over 90% of the food distributed each month to those in need. We also are a distribution center for the CSFP (Senior Food Box) distribution program.

As an agency partner of Hawaii Foodbank, we are committed to working alongside them to fight food insecurity our community. We appreciate Hawaii Foodbank’s efforts to provide healthy, local foods to those we serve. We strongly support this proposal and look forward to collaborating with them to distribute fresh, locally grown food to those most in need.

If additional information or clarification is needed, please feel free to reach out to us.

Sincerely,

Mark Yen
Our Lady of Sorrows
Social Ministry – Food Distribution

Owen K. Kaneshiro Farms LLC

95-935 Paikauhale St. Mililani, HI 96789

Tel: (808) 625-1275 Fax: (808) 627-9552

January 15, 2025

Aloha!

My name is Owen K. Kaneshiro, owner and farmer of Owen K. Kaneshiro Farms, LLC. I own a vegetable farm in Waianae. I am writing this letter in support of the "Farm to Families" bill. I feel that all families in Hawaii should have access to fresh produce. The Hawaii Food Bank has been a great partner in helping to bridge that gap between my farm and the community. Before this partnership, I was throwing away a surplus of produce. The Hawaii Food Bank has helped me run a more efficient farm with less waste. It's nice to know that my farm is helping to provide fresh produce to the people who need it the most, thus keeping the community healthy and happy. The "Farm to Families" bill will provide people with consistent access to local produce and foster food sustainability within the Hawaiian Islands.

Thank You,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Owen K. Kaneshiro", with a long, sweeping underline.

Owen K. Kaneshiro
Waianae, Hawaii



Super Utilizer ■ Ke Ku'una Na'au

1301 Punchbowl Street ■ Honolulu, Hawaii 96813 ■ Phone: (808) 691-1000 ■ Fax: (808) 691-4016

November 19, 2024

To our Legislators:

I am writing to you in support of: "Farm to Families" bill for 2025. We are a team that works with at-risk homeless and housed persons with medical needs. We see on a daily basis the struggle our people have getting healthy foods and know this bill can make a difference in their long-term health. Most of our people know what is healthy for them and do their best. We understand that it is not just a matter of choice but of access, cost, and convenience that influence their diet.

The Hawai'i Foodbank's programs and methods always put people first and offer solid solutions that can help get food to those who need it. The fact that "Farm to Families" also supports local farmers makes this a win-win for our community.

Please pass and fund the "Farm to Families" bill for 2025 and any other support for the Hawai'i Foodbank.

Sincerely,

Anne Chamness

Anne Chamness
Patient Community Navigator
The Queen's Care Coalition



in Manoa Valley

SAINT PIUS X CHURCH

2821 Lowrey Avenue

Honolulu, Hawaii

Phone (808) 988-3308

96822-1644

December 1, 2024

Aloha,

My name is Willa Papandrew and I am the volunteer coordinator of the Social Justice and Outreach Ministry of St. Pius X Catholic Church in Manoa on the Island of Oahu. I have worked in this ministry for over 20 years while working with the Hawaii Foodbank in feeding the poor of our island.

We have a Food Pantry at our church that has been serving families, who count on us, to provide both perishable and non-perishable food to feed their children. We fully support the Farm to Families legislation that would provide the nutrition these families need in their daily lives.

By working with local farmers and fresh food distributors here in Hawaii, we can best serve the poor in our communities. We need to work with them to build a more sustainable food system in Hawaii and not depend on mainland producers.

Fresh papayas, eggplant, sweet potatoes, breadfruit, corn, avocados, and bananas are some of our foods grown by our local farmers that our people love. They are a source of nutrition that our families need on their tables that will promote wellness in their household and throughout their community.

Mahalo nui for your consideration of the Farm to Families legislation that would support local farmers in supplying the nutrition and well being so needed for our poor families.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Willa Papandrew".

Willa Papandrew
Social Justice and Outreach Ministry
St. Pius X Catholic Church
Honolulu, Hawaii

December 17, 2024

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Thao Nguyen and I am the coordinator for the Olakino Produce Program at Saints Peter and Paul Catholic Church. We truly believe that 'access to healthy food is a basic human right no matter your age'. We are thankful to be in partnership with the Hawaii Food Bank to be able to serve our community.

We fully support the 'Farm to Families' bill as most of the people we serve in our community are kupuna. We have been consistently serving more than 400 households each month and over 90% of those we served are retired and in need of fresh fruits, vegetables, and eggs. This bill will help secure our community with fresh locally grown produces.

Being on an island, we should never depend on imported goods or food supplies from the mainland or other countries. It is neither efficient nor affordable, especially when it comes to fresh produces. The health benefits of those produce would decrease and costs will continue to increase. It is proven that fruits and vegetables begin to lose their nutrients within 24 hours after it is picked. We need to create sustainable food systems for Hawai'i.

We, as a community, needs to invest and support our local farmers. Investing in our local farmers will only strengthen our resources and secure Hawaii's future. Land in Hawaii is a premium but the health of all those who lives in Hawaii is priceless. We need to support and invest in our 'aina, our 'ohana, our kupuna, and our keiki because no one else will!

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to our shared vision of a thriving, food-secure Hawai'i. I am deeply grateful for your consideration of this important legislation and stand ready to collaborate with you in any way that may be helpful.

Thank you,

Thao Nguyen



January 15, 2025

Aloha!

My name is Chelsea Tamanaha, and I am the sales and marketing director of Sugarland Growers.

I am writing to fully support the "Farm to Families" bill, an essential piece of legislation designed to create a stable market for local food producers. This initiative will enhance our community food systems and guarantee that fresh, locally sourced produce is made available to all residents of the 'āina.

The partnership between local farms and food organizations benefits families in our communities and our economy in several ways.

Firstly, the bill directly supports Hawai'i's agricultural sector by ensuring a stable and equitable market for local produce, enabling farmers to confidently plan for future growth while providing nourishment to their communities.

Secondly, as an island, we must all unite for the future generations. The Foodbank continues to support all local communities, and we must all continue to support and rally together for them.

As the Foodbank continues to prioritize nourishing the bodies of our island residents, they lay the foundation for thriving communities, cultivating connections, sustainability and resilience.

Mahalo,

Chelsea Tamanaha

Honolulu, Hawai'i

Sales and Marketing Director

Aloha!

As a dedicated school librarian at Wahiawa Elementary School, I have had the privilege of serving Hawai'i's keiki for over 30 years in the Hawaii Department of Education.

By supporting the *Farm to Families* bill, we can strengthen our local food system, boost our economy, and improve the health of our local community. This legislation will help to connect our farmers with families in need, creating a more sustainable and equitable future for Hawai'i. Please support the *Farm to Families* bill.

The benefits of this partnership are far-reaching and impactful:

- **Nourish Our Community:** By increasing access to fresh, locally grown produce, we can improve the health and well-being of our community members, especially those facing food insecurity.
- **Build a Stronger Food System:** Investing in local agriculture strengthens our food supply chain, reduces our reliance on imported goods, and creates a more sustainable and resilient food system for Hawai'i.
- **Support Local Farmers and Economy:** This bill provides a stable market for our local farmers, empowering them to continue producing high-quality, nutritious food and contributing to our state's economy.

Studies have shown that access to healthy foods can significantly improve students' academic performance, behavior, and overall well-being. As an educator, I've seen excited kids when provided with fresh, healthy snacks instead of their usual sugary, processed foods, which negatively impact their focus and energy. Every child deserves access to nutritious food. By supporting the *Farm to Families* bill, you can ensure that all our keiki have the opportunity to thrive and be healthy!

Thank you for your support of our *Farm to Families* bill.

Stephanie Kuniyoshi
School Librarian
Wahiawa Elementary School
1402 Glen Ave.
Wahiawa, HI 96786

Dear Honorable Members of the Hawai'i State Legislature,

I am writing to express my strong support for the Hawai'i Foodbank's Farm to Families program. This vital initiative has made a significant impact on our community, providing healthy, fresh, locally-sourced food to families and children in need while simultaneously supporting our local farmers.

Through the Farm to Families program, we have invested over \$11 million in local food purchases and distributed more than 9 million pounds of nutritious produce. Last year alone, 88% of the \$1.3 million spent on produce directly supported our local agricultural sector.

We believe that this program is essential to strengthening our community food systems and creating a healthier, more resilient Hawai'i for all of our 'ohana. By providing consistent access to fresh, nutritious food, we can improve the health and well-being of our community members, especially our keiki.

We urge you to support our efforts to secure long-term state funding for the Farm to Families program during the 2025 state legislative session. By investing in this program, we can continue to:

- **Support local farmers and agriculture:** Strengthen our local food economy and reduce our reliance on imported food.
- **Combat food insecurity:** Provide nutritious food to families and children in need.
- **Improve public health:** Promote healthy eating habits and reduce diet-related diseases.

We thank you for your time and consideration. We look forward to working with you to ensure a brighter future for Hawai'i.

Sincerely,
Jade Santos
Wahiawa Elementary School
Student Services Coordinator
808-307-6020

"Do everything you can, with all that you have, wherever you are!" ~ Theodore Roosevelt

December 9th, 2024

To whom it may concern,

Aloha!

My name is Fuli Soa and I am the Family Resource Center Director at Waimānalo Elementary & Intermediate school on the island of Oahu in the state of Hawai'i. I am writing in support of the "Farm to Families" bill. Our school is a Title 1 school and all of our students qualify for free school meals. Many of our families are disadvantaged and fall in the lower socio income range. Through our Family Resource Center we distribute food weekly to our school families and wider community. It is essential that the food that we are serving our students and the food that we are distributing to our families every week is fresh and nutritional. The passing of the "Farms to Families" bill is a crucial step forward for our state to support the health and well being of our students and their families. At the same time we will continue to support our local farmers and food producers through strengthening our partnerships with them.

This can only be a win/win situation for our local farms, all the community food partners and especially our families in our communities. There will be less dependence on imported goods and there will be a more sustainable food system for our state as a whole. Our local farmers will be supported too and will be able to be part of a steady and fair market for their produce. At the same time they will be feeding the most needy in our community.

The more fresh and organic the produce, the better health-wise for our whole community. Our weekly food distribution provides our school families and wider community with an essential resource. Many of the families that we serve are houseless and struggle immensely with providing basic needs for themselves.

I am deeply grateful for your consideration of this important legislation and stand ready to collaborate with you in any way that may be helpful.

Thank you,

Fuli Soa
Waimānalo Elementary & Intermediate
FRC Director

Subject: Support for the "Farm to Families" Bill

To Whom It May Concern,

I hope this message finds you well. My name is Tiffani Pacapac, and I am a special education teacher at Waipahu Elementary School. I am reaching out with an urgent request for your support of the "Farm to Families" bill, which has the potential to transform our state's food security landscape.

This legislation will empower the Hawai'i Food Bank and other distributing organizations to collaborate more effectively with local farmers and food producers. By supporting this bill, we can ensure that our community members facing food insecurity receive fresh, locally grown produce. It will also strengthen our food supply chain, reduce our dependence on imported goods, and create a more resilient and sustainable food system in Hawaii. Additionally, it provides local farmers with a steady and fair market, allowing them to plan for future growth while nourishing our immediate community.

In December 2019, my students engaged in a Project Based Learning (PBL) initiative focused on the question, "How can we impact hunger in Waipahu?" Since partnering with the Hawai'i Food Bank 5 years ago, we have made significant strides in providing food to families experiencing food insecurity. In November 2024, we began distributing fresh fruits, and in just two distributions, we provided over 1,000 lbs of fresh produce. This initiative has led to increased participation in our weekly food pantry, providing essential nutrients our students need to thrive, and it alleviates the burden on teachers who previously used their own funds to supply food for students in need.

Your support of the "Farm to Families" bill is crucial in promoting long-term health and wellness for our community. Thank you for considering this important issue.

Best regards,
Tiffani Pacapac

WONG HON HIN Inc.

Address: 85-1330 Waianae Valley Road #C Waianae, HI 96792
Mailing Address: P.O. BOX 1978 Waianae Hawaii 96792
Phone: 808-386-6898
Fax: 808-696-9099
Email: huangsbasil@gmail.com

January 15, 2025,

Aloha, my name is Hong Fang Gan, my husband and I are co-owners of Wong Hon Hin Inc *dba Huang's Green Leaf Products*. We have been local farmers in the State of Hawaii for the last 25 years and manage over 60 acres of land in West Oahu.

I am writing **in support of the** "Farm to Families Bill" a critical piece of legislation that will help secure a consistent market for local food producers, strengthening our community food systems and ensuring that fresh, locally grown produce reaches families facing food insecurity.

The partnership between local farms and food organizations benefits families in our communities and our economy by:

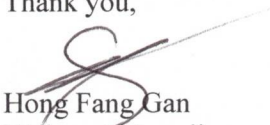
1. **Strengthening Hawai'i's Food Supply Chain:** By investing in local agriculture, we reduce our dependence on imported goods, creating a more resilient and sustainable food system for Hawai'i.
2. **Supporting Local Farmers:** The bill offers a direct benefit to Hawai'i's agricultural sector, providing a steady and fair market for local produce. Farmers can plan for future growth knowing their products will feed their neighbors in need.
3. **Enhancing Nutritional Access:** Fresh, local produce provides essential nutrients to individuals and families who may otherwise lack access to healthy food options. This not only fights hunger but also promotes long-term health and wellness in our communities.

Our partnership with the Hawaii Food Bank and the Farm to Families program was critical to our survival during the Covid pandemic. With tourism coming to a halt during the pandemic we were left with a severe surplus of products that could not sell in the marketplace due to severely low demand. We got connected to the Hawaii Food Bank and they were able to keep us farming our fields and producing local agriculture with funding from the Farm to Families program. We are grateful for this program because we did not need to furlough any of our forty employees and continued our operation.

Since then, this partnership has grown and the support we have gotten from the Hawaii Foodbank has helped us increase our production of local produce and increase the amount of products we can harvest for our local food supply chain.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to our shared vision of a thriving, food-secure Hawai'i. I am deeply grateful for your consideration of this important legislation and stand ready to collaborate with you in any way that may be helpful.

Thank you,


Hong Fang Gan
Waianae, Hawaii
Vice President, Wong Hon Hin. Inc



HAWAII APPLESEED

CENTER FOR LAW & ECONOMIC JUSTICE

January 15, 2025

RE: Support for “Farm to Family” legislation

Dear legislators,

Hawai‘i Appleseed is a local policy institute committed to advancing social and economic justice, ensuring the people of Hawai‘i have access to the resources they need to thrive. An equitable food system—one in which all residents have the opportunity to grow and eat healthy, affordable, and culturally relevant food—is core to our vision.

A strong emergency food system is a critical pillar of food equity and resiliency, which is why we support instituting a “Farm to Family” program at the state level. This legislation would strengthen local food supply chains, from guaranteeing that nutritious food is available to more families, to supporting the local agricultural economy, to reducing farm food waste.

Fresh, local produce is essential for improving community health, yet is often out of reach for many families struggling to afford life in Hawai‘i. This program would help make healthy, whole foods available to more people, thereby alleviating hunger and preventing long-term health issues like diabetes, heart disease, stroke, and depression.¹

“Farm to family” not only strengthens Hawai‘i’s food supply chain but also provides a backup, or “safety net” market for local farmers during times of economic crisis or natural disaster. When these events strike, the emergency food system becomes a lifeline not just for families seeking food, but also for farmers seeking markets when tourism plummets. Most recently, the Maui wildfires contributed to a spike in food insecurity—as many as 49% of Maui’s population.² It was the food banks and distribution partners who stepped in—institutions that historically have relied almost entirely on charitable contributions.

Thank you for your leadership and for your consideration of this important legislation. We stand ready to collaborate with you in any way that may be helpful.

Sincerely,

Daniela Spoto
Director of Food Equity
Hawai‘i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice

¹ Food Research & Action Center (FRAC), “Hunger & Health: The Impact of Poverty, Food Insecurity, and Poor Nutrition on Health and Well-Being,” FRAC, December 2017, p. 1-2.

² Hawai‘i Foodbank, “The State of Food Insecurity in Hawai‘i,” Hawai‘i Foodbank, May 2024, p. 6.



Hawaii Cattlemen's Council, Inc.

December 1, 2024

Aloha,

The Hawaii Cattlemen's Council (HCC) is the statewide umbrella organization comprised of the four county-level Cattlemen's Associations. Our member ranchers represent over 60,000 head of beef cows: more than 75% of all the beef cows in the State. Ranchers are the stewards of approximately 25% of the State's total land mass.

HCC supports the "Farm to Families" bill, which will help to create a consistent market for local food producers and benefit community health and local agricultural production while addressing the growing issue of food security in Hawaii.

Securing a consistent, reliable market for local produce and proteins will benefit both the consumer and the producer. We need to reduce our reliance on imports and focus on building up our agricultural producers. Our farmers and ranchers want to provide local products for our community, and the Farm to Families program will strengthen our food supply chain to be better able to service everyone in times of crisis, support local farmers and ranchers to give them the confidence to continue to increase and improve production, and increase the access to nutritional food products that feed growing minds and bodies. Long-term funding for this program will result in beneficial outcomes for everyone.

The Hawaii Foodbank is a trusted, competent organization to carry out this mission. Ensuring our community gets basic nutritional needs should be a root issue that we all need to address as a cohesive team. Our farmers and ranchers are ready to step up to produce the food that is needed, and the Hawaii Foodbank is well equipped to facilitate this.

Thank you for your commitment to fighting food insecurity and supporting Hawaii's farmers and ranchers. Please support this important legislation.

Aloha,

Nicole Galase
Hilo, Hawaii
Managing Director





P.O. Box 253, Kunia, Hawai'i 96759
Phone: (808) 848-2074; Fax: (808) 848-1921
e-mail info@hfbf.org; www.hfbf.org

November 26, 2024

Aloha:

Since 1948, the Hawai'i Farm Bureau (HFB) has served as Hawai'i's voice of agriculture to protect, advocate, and advance the social, economic, and educational interests of our diverse agricultural members who produce food, flowers, energy, and more, for Hawai'i's communities.

As the largest agricultural organization in Hawai'i representing nearly 1,800 farm family members statewide, it is my pleasure to support the "Farm to Families" bill, a critical piece of legislation that will help secure a consistent market for local farmers, strengthening our community food systems and increasing access to fresh, locally sourced food for communities in need while strengthening our local food system and enhancing food security.

The partnership between local farms and food banks benefits families in our communities and our economy by:

Building a Stronger Food Supply Chain for Hawai'i: Investing in local agriculture reduces our reliance on imports and fosters a robust, self-reliant food system. This approach enhances the sustainability and resilience of Hawai'i's food supply.

Empowering Local Farmers: The proposed legislation directly benefits Hawai'i's farmers by ensuring a reliable and equitable market for their produce. This stability enables farmers to confidently grow their operations, knowing their efforts will nourish their communities.

Improving Access to Nutritious Food: Locally grown, fresh produce provides vital nutrients to individuals and families who might otherwise face barriers to healthy eating. This initiative addresses hunger while supporting the overall health and well-being of Hawai'i's residents.

Since 2020, the Hawai'i Farm Bureau has partnered with Hawai'i food banks to source fresh, local foods for community feeding programs. Together, the Hawai'i Foodbank, Maui Food Bank, and The Food Basket work with nearly 500 agency partners to distribute safe and healthy food to food-insecure individuals and families in our communities. They provide an invaluable service to our community, and we are committed to continuing to work closely with them to supply fresh, local food products for their distribution programs.



P.O. Box 253, Kunia, Hawai'i 96759

Phone: (808) 848-2074; Fax: (808) 848-1921

e-mail info@hfbf.org; www.hfbf.org

We recognize the importance of ensuring that our local agricultural products reach those most in need, and we look forward to continuing our collaboration with our food banks in support of their shared mission to end hunger in Hawai'i. We are confident this program will positively impact our community by improving food access while supporting Hawai'i's local food systems. We are happy to work with the food banks on this vital work.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brian Miyamoto". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Brian Miyamoto
Executive Director, Hawai'i Farm Bureau



Officers

Kaipo Kekona
State President

Anabella Bruch
Vice-President

Maureen Datta
Secretary

Reba Lopez
Treasurer

Chapter Presidents

Clarence Baber
Kohala, Hawaii

Odysseus Yacalis
East Hawaii

Puna, Hawaii

Andrea Drayer
Ka'u, Hawaii

Kona, Hawaii

Fawn Helekahi-Burns
Hana, Maui

Mason Scharer
Haleakala, Maui

Kaiea Medeiros
Mauna Kahalawai,
Maui

Kaipo Kekona
Lahaina, Maui

Rufina Kaauwai
Molokai

Negus Manna
Lana'i

India Clark
North Shore, O'ahu

Christian Zuckerman
Wai'anae, O'ahu

Ted Radovich
Waimanalo, O'ahu

Vincent Kimura
Honolulu, O'ahu

Natalie Urminska
Kauai

Aloha,

On behalf of the Hawaii Farmers Union (HFU), I am writing to express our strong support for Farm to Families legislation. As a statewide organization dedicated to supporting family farmers, ranchers, and fishers, HFU embraces legislation that cultivates resilient local food systems and strengthens the bonds between our farmers and the communities they feed.

The challenges highlighted in this bill—widespread food insecurity and the need for greater access to fresh, nutritious produce—are persistent and pressing. One in three households in Hawaii struggles to secure consistent access to food, and, alarmingly, nearly thirty percent of our keiki face hunger. These sobering statistics point to the urgent need for a solution that is both compassionate and sustainable.

This legislation directly addresses these concerns by investing in the Hawaii Farm to Families Program, which will fund food banks to purchase, store, and transport fresh, locally grown and produced foods. This support will not only provide greater food security for our most vulnerable populations but also promote the economic well-being of our local farmers and food producers. By creating reliable demand and fair compensation for their products and services, the program allows Hawaii's growers to focus on quality, diversify crops, and increase production, ensuring that healthy, culturally relevant foods—from kalo and breadfruit to choy sum and long beans—are readily available to families across the state.

Our farmers are prepared to rise to the occasion. They have long partnered with community organizations, food hubs, and food banks, demonstrating that small-scale, regenerative agriculture can be a linchpin in feeding Hawaii's ohana. The Hawaii Farm to Families Program will help scale these efforts to meet the reality of our current hunger crisis, ensuring that local, nutritious, and culturally familiar foods fill the tables of those who need it most.

In short, HFU believes this bill embodies a holistic, community-centered approach to combating food insecurity: it empowers farmers, strengthens local economies, uplifts cultural traditions, and ensures healthy meals for our keiki, kupuna, and neighbors in need. We urge you to pass this bill to help secure Hawaii's food future and nourish the health and well-being of all our residents.

Mahalo,

Kaipo Kekona, President HFUU/HFUF



2025 Network Members

Aloha Harvest
Aloha United Way
Chef Hui
City and County of Honolulu
County of Hawai'i
Hawai'i Alliance for
Progressive Action (HAPA)
Hawai'i Appleseed
Hawai'i Children's Action
Network
Hawai'i Dept. of Agriculture
Hawai'i Dept. of Health
Hawai'i Food Bank
Hawai'i Food Bank - Kaua'i
Branch
Hawai'i Good Food Alliance
Hawai'i Public Health Institute
Kōkua Kalihi Valley
Lanakila Pacific
Mālama Kaua'i
Maui Department of
Agriculture
Maui Food Bank
Parents and Children Together
Supersistence
The Food Basket
The Pantry, by Feeding Hawai'i
Together
Wai'anae Coast
Comprehensive Health Center

hawaiihungeraction.org

January 15, 2025

RE: Support for “Farm to Family” legislation

Dear legislators,

The Hawai'i Hunger Action Network, a coalition of more than twenty local organizations with the mission to advocate for food security for Hawai'i households, would like to express strong support for the proposed “Farm to Family” program.

Our network is intimately familiar with the toll disasters can take on communities, and many of our members are at the frontlines of response efforts. Whether it is in response to wildfires, a pandemic, a government shutdown, a hurricane, flood, volcano eruption—or just the day-to-day emergency of needing to put food on the table in an economy when many families are one paycheck away from financial devastation—our emergency food partners are there to respond to the community's needs. And they often do this on very stretched and limited resources.

A strong emergency food system is a critical pillar of resiliency, not just because of its role in a disaster, but also in its potential to strengthen local food supply chains and our island's agricultural economy. This program would be a powerful step toward achieving this outcome, by guaranteeing that nutritious food is available to more families, supporting local farmers, and even reducing farm food waste.

Thank you for your leadership and for your consideration of this important legislation.

With aloha,

Hawai'i Hunger Action Network membership



12/1/2025

Re: Testimony in Strong Support of Hawai'i Farm to Families Program

REDUCING HARM,
PROMOTING HEALTH,
CREATING WELLNESS,
AND FIGHTING STIGMA
IN HAWAII AND
THE PACIFIC

To Whom it May concern:

The Hawai'i Health & Harm Reduction Center (HHRC) strongly supports the Hawai'i Farm to Families Program. This initiative is a vital step toward alleviating food insecurity across our islands while also supporting local agricultural producers.

Food insecurity remains one of Hawai'i's most pressing challenges. The economic disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic amplified this issue, and while the immediate crisis has passed, many families continue to struggle with access to fresh and healthy foods. This program would ensure a consistent supply of culturally relevant, locally grown food to food banks and communities in need, addressing the dual goals of improving food security and boosting the local economy.

HHRC's mission is to reduce harm, promote health, create wellness, and fight stigma in Hawai'i and the Pacific. We focus our efforts on communities disproportionately affected by social determinants of health, including but not limited to people living with HIV, hepatitis, and substance use, as well as LGBTQIA+, Native Hawaiian, and houseless populations.

During the height of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021, HHRC collaborated with the Hawai'i Food Bank to distribute over 500,000 pounds of food to thousands of families. These experiences underscored the urgent need for food banks to have access to fresh, healthy, and locally sourced foods beyond what is provided through donations. This program will empower food banks to meet these needs sustainably while supporting local farmers and food producers.

Hawai'i Farm to Families Program represents an opportunity to create a win-win scenario for Hawai'i: reducing food insecurity, strengthening our local agricultural economy, and ensuring the well-being of our most vulnerable communities.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in strong support of this important measure.

Andrew Ogata
Director of Marketing and Development
Hawai'i Health & Harm Reduction Center

HAWAII HEALTH
& HARM REDUCTION
CENTER

677 Ala Moana Blvd.
Suite 226
Honolulu, HI 96813

(808) 521-2437

www.hhhrc.org

December 20, 2024

Aloha,

I'm Nate Hix, the Policy and Advocacy Director with the Hawai'i Public Health Institute. I am asking for your support for the "Farm to Families" initiative, which would increase access to local produce for families in need while also supporting Hawai'i's agricultural community.

In 2023, 30% of local households experienced food insecurity—a sobering reminder that far too many in our community worry about where their next meal will come from. Our food banks have been a lifeline, providing over 1.2 million monthly meals to more than 120,000 families. However, these meals often lack the fresh produce necessary for balanced nutrition.

Improving Community Health

Access to fresh produce helps prevent chronic diseases, reduce stress, and promote overall well-being. By purchasing local fruits and vegetables, food banks can offer more nutritious options to families struggling to afford or transport fresh foods.

Economic Support for Local Families

Consistent access to fresh, affordable produce alleviates financial pressure on households. With nutritious foods readily available through food banks, families can redirect limited resources toward other essentials like housing, healthcare, and education. This economic relief contributes to improved overall stability and a more equitable distribution of resources in our community.

Building a Resilient Economy

By increasing demand for local produce, food banks strengthen our agricultural economy and reduce reliance on imports. Reliable food bank purchases provide a stable income source for local farmers, keeping funds circulating within the state. This collaboration among farmers, food banks, and communities fosters self-sufficiency and creates a more sustainable food system for everyone.

Investing in the "Farm to Families" program tackles food insecurity and builds stronger, healthier, and more equitable communities. By addressing immediate needs and fostering long-term solutions, we can make meaningful progress in the fight against poverty and hunger.

Mahalo for your continued commitment to supporting local families. Please do not hesitate to reach out if you have any questions or would like additional information.

Mahalo,

Nate Hix

Director of Policy and Advocacy
Hawai'i Public Health Institute
808.469.8740
nate@hiphi.org



January 15, 2025

Aloha,

My name is Jay Ana, and I am writing in strong support of the "Farm to Families" bill, a pivotal piece of legislation that has the potential to transform our state's food security landscape. This bill will allow food distributing organizations to strengthen their partnerships with local farmers and food producers, ensuring that fresh, locally grown produce reaches families facing food insecurity.

This critical partnership between local farms and food organizations benefits local families in our communities, and our economy, by:

1. **Strengthening Hawai'i's Food Supply Chain:** By investing in local agriculture, we reduce our dependence on imported goods, creating a more resilient and sustainable food system for Hawai'i.
2. **Supporting Local Farmers:** The bill offers a direct benefit to Hawai'i's agricultural sector, providing a steady and fair market for local produce. Farmers can plan for future growth knowing their products will feed their neighbors in need.
3. **Enhancing Nutritional Access:** Fresh, local produce provides essential nutrients to individuals and families who may otherwise lack access to healthy food options. This not only fights hunger but also promotes long-term health and wellness in our communities.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to our shared vision of a thriving, food-secure Hawai'i. I am deeply grateful for your consideration of this important legislation and stand ready to collaborate with you in any way that may be helpful.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jay Ana", is written above the printed name "Jay Ana".

Jay Ana



January 15, 2025

Aloha kākou,

My name is Keola Sifuaifu and I'm the vice president of Enterprise Operations Services at Hawaiian Electric. I'm writing today on behalf of Hawaiian Electric to urge you to support the Farm to Families bill, legislation that can help make a difference for the many local families that don't have access to fresh, healthy food.

Hawaiian Electric has been a long-time champion of the important mission carried out by local food distributing organizations, whether it's providing support through charitable donations, organizing food drives at our base yards and offices, or rallying employees to volunteer time in the food warehouses.

As someone with deep roots in Hawai'i, it concerns me that more than 40% of native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders are food insecure. We live on an island with rich soil and our local farmers are experts at cultivating the land. Our keiki and kupuna should never go hungry. No one should need to choose between buying food or paying rent. The Farm to Families bill will help ensure that local food producers can strengthen their partnerships with distributors so that fresh fruit and vegetables can reach those who need it the most.

Making healthy food available is especially critical for our native Hawaiian population, which still struggles with proper nutrition. Fresh, local produce can help improve the long-term health of our kama'āina.

The Farm to Families bill will also strengthen the food supply chain in Hawai'i, and make us less dependent on bringing products into the state from the mainland. Anyone who has been to the grocery store in the past year knows how much food prices have increased, especially imported goods. Investing in local agriculture will allow us to create a more sustainable and resilient food system here, reducing our dependence on imports and insulating us from unstable shipping costs.

Mahalo for your consideration of this important legislation, as well as for your commitment to our shared vision of a healthy and sustainable Hawai'i, in which our children and grandchildren can thrive for generations to come.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Keola Sifuaifu', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Keola Sifuaifu

SB-1250

Submitted on: 2/2/2025 7:55:54 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/3/2025 1:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Megan Fox	Testifying for Malama Kaua'i	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The intention of this bill is critical to support our producers during times of crisis, and ensure our families facing hunger are nourished.

We would love to see the funding from this initiative be available to all emergency feeding operations across the islands and not just a handful of food banks, in order to be more equitable and fair. Community-based efforts deserve access to this opportunity as well.

It's a smart strategy for the health and well being of our communities - physically and economically - while providing support during the challenging cost of living issues facing many.

SB-1250

Submitted on: 2/2/2025 3:41:18 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/3/2025 1:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
laurel brier	Testifying for Kauai Climate Action Coalition	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Everyone wins with this bill. Supporting local farmers is supporting our community and taking positive climate action. Buying local generally means using the land in ways that help sequester carbon and reduces the GHG emitted in transporting food from the mainland. Making more fresh, locally grown produce is good for the health of our families. Much of what is available at Food Banks is packaged food, not of the highest quality. Providing disadvantaged people or people in crisis with locally grown fruits and vegetables is genuine service. Strong support for this legislation that helps our community in multiple ways.



The Hawai'i Youth Food Council

Gigi Kiyabu - Mid-Pacific
Shania Wilson - Mililani High School
Vivienne Hill - Primsa High School
Kaylie Hirayama - Honoka'a High School
Star Woo - Kamehameha Schools Kapalama Campus
Quingqing Quen - 'Iolani School
Maya Gaudino - Punahou
Jaden Tonyokwe - Maui High School
Leilani Moran Hurtt - Mid-Pacific
Alvis Agader - Maui High School
Alliyanah Polido - Maui High School
Chloe Hannsz - Kapaa High School
Audrey Lin - 'Iolani School
Talia David - Lahainalua High School
Mia Nishiguchi - Kalani High School
Erika Tien - Punahou

Date: 02-01-25

To: Senator Gabbard, Chair

Senator Richards, Vice Chair

Members of the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment (AEN)

From: Hawai'i Youth Food Council

Re: SUPPORT for SB1250

Hearing: 02-03-25, 1:02pm

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Vivienne, and I submit this testimony on behalf of the Hawai'i Youth Food Council (HYFC) in strong support of SB 1250, which would establish and fund the Hawai'i Farm to Families Program. This policy is about more than food—it's about ensuring that every keiki in Hawai'i has the nutrition they need to both grow and thrive.

Hunger is not just an abstract issue, it's something we see in our classrooms, in our communities, and sometimes in our own homes. It is not just a statistic—it is a daily reality for one in three households across our islands. For too many families, fresh, local produce is out of reach, leading to poor health outcomes and perpetuating cycles of diet-related illness. The effects are particularly devastating for our keiki, nearly 30% of whom grow up in food-insecure homes.

A child who is hungry cannot focus in school, cannot fully participate in their community, and is at greater risk of experiencing long-term health and developmental challenges. It's the classmate too embarrassed to admit they skipped breakfast, the friend who eats slowly at lunch to make their meal last, the kids who don't know what dinner will look like when they go home. No one, especially not a child, should have to carry the weight of food insecurity.

hiphi.org/HYFC • 707 Richards Street, Suite 300 • Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

The Hawai'i Youth Food Council is a Hawai'i Farm to School Network program and Hawai'i Public Health Institute program. It includes students from public, charter, and independent high schools across Hawai'i. The council was established in 2020 to engage and empower youth in rewriting the present narrative of Hawai'i's food system. Members identify and address systemic issues throughout various dimensions of the food chain to promote community participation in forming resilient, equitable local food economies.



At the same time, we know Hawai'i's farmers work tirelessly to grow the food that sustains our community, yet many struggle to make a living. This policy offers a practical solution, connecting local farms with families in need. By strengthening this relationship, we are not only ensuring local produce gets to those who need it most, but are also supporting the hardworking people who cultivate and protect our land.

This bill embodies our shared values of both mālama 'āina and need for resilience, prioritizing localized solutions to food insecurity while reinforcing our collective responsibility to care for one another. It is a vision for Hawai'i that we, as young people, want to live in—one where no family has to stress over where their next meal will come from, and where our food system is built on the values of sustainability, resilience, and care for one another.

We urge the committee to pass S.B. 1250 and invest in a future where every person in our community has access to fresh, healthy food.

Mahalo for your time and consideration,

Vivienne Hill

Representative, Hawai'i Youth Food Council

hiphi.org/HYFC • 707 Richards Street, Suite 300 • Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

The **Hawai'i Youth Food Council** is a Hawai'i Farm to School Network program and Hawai'i Public Health Institute program. It includes students from public, charter, and independent high schools across Hawai'i. The council was established in 2020 to engage and empower youth in rewriting the present narrative of Hawai'i's food system. Members identify and address systemic issues throughout various dimensions of the food chain to promote community participation in forming resilient, equitable local food economies.

SB-1250

Submitted on: 2/2/2025 6:04:01 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/3/2025 1:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ronald Weidenbach	Testifying for Hawaii Fish Company Inc.	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support SB1250 which would help local farms earn income by providing food to local food organizations. This is a win-win opportunity for both and the local community.

Monday, February 3, 2025, at 1:02 PM
Via Video Conference; Conference Room 224

Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment

To: Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair
Senator Herbert "Tim" Richards, III, Vice Chair

From: Michael Robinson
Vice President, Government Relations & Community Affairs

Re: **Testimony in Support of SB 1250
Relating To Farm To Families**

My name is Michael Robinson, and I am the Vice President of Government Relations & Community Affairs at Hawai'i Pacific Health. Hawai'i Pacific Health is a not-for-profit health care system comprised of its four medical centers – Kapi'olani, Pali Momi, Straub and Wilcox and over 70 locations statewide with a mission of creating a healthier Hawai'i.

HPH writes in SUPPORT of SB 1250 which establishes the Hawai'i Farm to Families Program to fund food banks and alleviate food shortages in the State.

HPH has long recognized the relationship between healthy outcomes and food security, as well as the strong connection between access to healthy foods with health and wellness. HPH screens our in-patients across our facilities for indications of food insecurity and is acutely aware of the challenge it is for our patients. The link between a healthy diet and healthy living is well established where lower food insecurity is linked to lower risk of obesity, heart disease, type 2 diabetes and certain cancers. Healthy eating can help people with chronic diseases manage these conditions and avoid complications. The crisis in food security among the most vulnerable population has been reported and has come to light more recently in the Aloha United Way's 2024 ALICE Report. The Report indicated that 28% of households statewide face food insecurity; nearly half (46%) of households below the ALICE Threshold do not have consistent access to food.

Programs that encourage partnerships between farmers and food assistance programs can make a profound impact. By investing in Hawaii-grown agriculture producers, the State can support not only local farmers but also the communities they feed. This approach aligns with the values of mālama 'āina, caring for the land, and ensures that the State honors the deep connection between the land and the people of Hawaii. Uplifting local farmers will also uplift the entire community, fostering a more resilient food system that can withstand future challenges. The Hawai'i Farm to Families Program would support not only families and their food needs, but would also provide Hawaii's agriculture

producers with a market to support their operations, and keep moneys circulating within the State to boost the local economy.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

To: Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment
Re: **SB 1250 – Relating to Farm to Families**
Hawai'i State Capitol & Via Videoconference
February 3, 2025, 1:02 PM

Dear Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and Committee Members,

On behalf of Hawai'i Children's Action Network Speaks!, I am writing in **SUPPORT of SB 1250**. This bill establishes the Hawaii Farm to Families Program to alleviate food shortages in the State, requires reports to the Legislature prior to the Regular Sessions of 2026 and 2027, and appropriates funds.

According to the Hawai'i Food Bank, in 29% of households with children, one or more keiki are food insecure.¹ Especially with the highest cost of living and most expensive groceries in the nation,² it is nearly impossible for the low-income families in Hawai'i to afford to buy healthy food, such as fresh fruits and vegetables.

In addition, it is well established that the stresses of childhood poverty have both immediate and long-term effects on keiki's physical and mental health, behavioral self-control, academic achievement, and earnings as adults.³

That's why it's so important to support Hawai'i's food banks and farmers by providing state funds to Hawai'i food banks to secure consistent supplies of locally produced or grown food for hungry families.

Food banks and their partner agencies help ensure that struggling families with keiki do not go hungry by distributing millions of pounds of food per year to those in need in our state. The recent years of high inflation, especially for groceries, the devastating wildfires, and the lingering effects of the pandemic have led our state's food banks to struggle with continual rising demand.⁴

This program would have the added plus of supporting our local farms. Farm to families is a win-win, by providing local food to those who need it, supporting local farmers, and strengthening local food systems.

Mahalo for this opportunity to provide testimony. Please pass this bill.

Sincerely,

Nicole Woo
Director of Research and Economic Policy

¹ <https://hawaiifoodbank.org/food-insecurity/>

² <https://meric.mo.gov/data/cost-living-data-series>

³ <https://www.apa.org/pi/ses/resources/indicator/2014/06/childhood-poverty>

⁴ <https://www.khon2.com/local-news/hawai%CA%BBis-foodbanks-see-uptick-in-food-assistance-needs/>

January 15th 2025



Aloha!

My name is Yoshito L'Hote, Chief executive officer for 'Āina Ho'okupu o Kilauea, a 501c3 non profit entity on the north shore of Kaua'i.

We are developing a 75 acre community ag center where we are exploring and implementing a vertically integrated farm that is increasing food security and resiliency for the island of kaua'i. We are writing in support of the "Farm to Families" bill, a critical piece of legislation that will help secure a consistent market for local food producers like us, strengthening our community food systems and ensuring that fresh, locally grown produce reaches families facing food insecurity. We have been distributing food boxes around the island since COVID and feel strongly in finding the mechanisms to continue the program in perpetuity. The 250 boxes a week we produce have helped the farm and retail store reduce waste and provide a healthy alternative to other food bank foods currently available.

One of our biggest challenge is to find long term reliable markets that can support small and medium size farms, and this bill will do just that.

With a growing market share the local production can increase and the reliability and quality can be supported. Our heavy reliance on imports makes us very vulnerable especially in time of crisis and every concrete support will ensure for a more sustainable and resilient for food system. Now we'll diversify the economy allowing more farmers to have ways to bring their product to market and support other added value businesses and restaurants by increasing their production. But this cannot happen without the financial commitment that the state can provide to create a tomorrow where most people eat locally grown produce as we have an incredible ability to grow round the year an incredible variety of fruits and vegetables and protein.

The other added advantages of having a local food system is proper management of our environment is the reduction of carbon footprint and waste generation but most importantly we are what we eat and when we eat fresh vibrant foods our health inevitably gets better we also than to want to be involved at a deeper level when we know where our food come from who the food providers are and how we can help them produce more and better food.

We have been providing and working with the foodbank since covid and we are now providing 65 kupuna boxes every week and the response is fantastic and the kupuna really appreciate that fresh mango or papaya, the salad and the sweet potatoes.

Thank you,

Yoshito L'Hote, CEO for 'Āina Ho'okupu o Kīlauea
PO Box 1023, Kilauea HI 96754
Phone: (808) 652-0069

December 18, 2024

Aloha,

My name is Mahealani Contrades-Brun, and I serve as the Parent Community Networking Center (PCNC) Facilitator at 'Ele'ele Elementary School. I am reaching out with an urgent request for your support of the "*Farm to Families*" bill, a critical piece of legislation that could dramatically enhance food security across our state.

This bill has the potential to strengthen the connections between local farmers, food distributors, and families in need, ensuring that fresh, locally grown produce reaches households struggling with food insecurity.

The benefits of this bill extend beyond providing fresh food. It will help our communities and economy in several important ways:

- **Strengthening Hawai'i's Food Supply Chain:** By supporting local agriculture, we reduce our reliance on imported goods and build a more resilient, sustainable food system for Hawai'i.
- **Supporting Local Farmers:** This bill creates a steady and reliable market for locally grown produce, giving our farmers the stability they need to plan, grow, and thrive while directly contributing to the well-being of their neighbors.
- **Enhancing Nutritional Access:** By increasing access to fresh, local produce, we ensure that families have the healthy food they need to thrive, promoting long-term health and wellness, and helping to combat food insecurity.

The partnership we have with our local food bank is essential for some of our families who struggle to afford fresh fruits and vegetables. On our distribution days, it is truly heartwarming to see the faces of our keiki light up when they receive fresh produce.

Your leadership on this issue is vital, and I am deeply grateful for your commitment to building a food-secure Hawai'i. I strongly encourage your support for this legislation and stand ready to collaborate in any way that may help advance this important initiative.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

O wau me ka ha'aha'a,

Mahealani Contrades-Brun

PCNC Facilitator

'Ele'ele Elementary School, Kaua'i, Hawai'i



December 14, 2024

Aloha!

I am Director of Operations for the Ho`okipa Kauai Food Pantry, which has weekly distributions in four locations on Kauai plus a roving outreach distribution to unsheltered homeless wherever we can find them. We distribute food to nearly 400 families a week.

We strongly support the Farm to Families program, which has completely transformed our ability to serve the undernourished in Kauai. Before this program, there were times each year when we were lucky to provide these families with an apple from Washington. Since the program was implemented, the Hawaii Foodbank has been able to regularly supply us with a selection of nutritious and fresh fruits and vegetables grown by local farmers. This type of support is critical to the health and well-being of many local families who are overwhelmed by the increasing costs of shelter or have been displaced completely.

This program is also critical to our statewide efforts to create a sustainable food supply chain. The Covid-19 pandemic was a wake-up call to the fact that we cannot be totally reliant upon outside sources for food. There will be other disruptions. Government assistance for small local farmers is essential to the continued transformation of Hawaiian land use from plantation-based exporting to self-sustainability.

We are wholly appreciative of your leadership in this effort and strongly urge you to continue this important program.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Best Regards
Ron Garrison
Ho`okipa Kauai Director of Operations

Ho`okipa Kauai, P.O. Box 223154, Princeville, HI 96722

January 15, 2025

Aloha!

My name is Laurie Yoshida, and I am the chair of the Kauai Advisory Board for the Hawai'i Foodbank.

I am writing to urgently ask for your support of the Farm to Families bill, a critical piece of legislation that can potentially transform our state's food security landscape. This bill will allow food distributing organizations to strengthen their partnerships with local farmers and food producers, ensuring that fresh, locally grown produce reaches families facing food insecurity. So many members of our community are food insecure or one paycheck away and these critical services will help them with much needed healthy food.

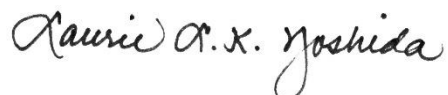
The partnership between local farms and food organizations benefits families in our communities and our economy by:

1. **Supporting Local Farmers:** The bill offers a direct benefit to Hawai'i's agricultural sector, providing a steady and fair market for local produce. Farmers can plan for future growth knowing their products will feed their neighbors in need.
2. **Enhancing Nutritional Access:** Fresh, local produce provides essential nutrients to individuals and families who may otherwise lack access to healthy food options. This not only fights hunger but also promotes long-term health and wellness in our communities.
3. **Strengthening Hawai'i's Food Supply Chain:** By investing in local agriculture, we reduce our dependence on imported goods, creating a more resilient and sustainable food system for Hawai'i.

I have witnessed firsthand how a bag of food can help a family bridge the gap and help them feed their children. Through my community service opportunities, I have seen children living on the beach, sometimes going an entire day without any food, and how that affects their ability to learn in the classroom. The food they are provided not only nourishes their bodies, but also provides them with an opportunity to learn and grow and develop into productive citizens. I know that there are costs to this program, but without it, we will spend much more in the future.

Thank you for your commitment to a food secure Hawai'i. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me. I look forward to working with you to help end hunger in Hawai'i.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Laurie A.K. Yoshida".

Laurie Yoshida
Lihu'e, HI

January 15, 2025

Aloha!

As a resident of Kaua'i and a member of the Advisory Board for the Hawai'i Foodbank Kaua'i Branch, I am writing with an urgent request for your support of the "Farm to Families" bill, a pivotal piece of legislation that has the potential to transform our state's food security landscape. This bill will allow food distributing organizations to strengthen their partnerships with local farmers and food producers, ensuring that fresh, locally grown produce reaches families facing food insecurity.

By fostering a partnership between local farms and food organizations, families and businesses benefit in a number of ways:

- Reducing our dependence on imported goods, creating a more resilient and sustainable food system for Hawai'i.
- Supporting agriculture by providing a steady and fair market for local produce.
- Getting healthy food into the hands of our families who might not otherwise have access to healthy food options.

I have seen first-hand the incredible work of the Hawai'i Foodbank Kaua'i Branch and know that the needs are far greater than the available resources. Current uncertainty in the federal funding for assistance programs of all kinds makes the need to create new resource streams even more urgent.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to our shared vision of a thriving, food-secure Hawai'i. I am deeply grateful for your consideration of this important legislation.

Mahalo,



Beth Amaro
Puhi, Kaua'i, Hawai'i

Aloha!

I'm Josephine Brown, the PCNC (Parent Community Networking Coordinator) at Kalāheo Elementary School. I'm reaching out to urgently request your support for the "Farm to Families" bill. I believe that this vital legislation has the potential to transform Hawai'i's food security and strengthen our local agricultural community.

I have observed firsthand the transformative impact of connecting local farms with our food distribution efforts. The "Farm to Families" bill would allow us to strengthen these vital partnerships, ensuring that fresh, locally grown produce reaches our students and their families who face food insecurity.

At Kalāheo Elementary, we've seen impressive benefits from incorporating local produce into our school pantry such as:

- ★ Nourishing our KEIKI, our students now have access to a variety of nutritious, island-grown fruits and vegetables. This not only addresses immediate hunger but also promotes long-term health and wellness among our keiki. The excitement on their faces when they receive these fresh goods, is truly heartwarming.
- ★ Supporting our COMMUNITY, it can be seen that by sourcing from local farmers, we're not just feeding our students; we're also supporting our neighbors and strengthening our local economy. This connection has created a sense of pride and community within our school ohana.
- ★ EDUCATIONAL opportunities, the partnership has opened doors for educational initiatives. Our students can learn about agriculture, nutrition, and the importance of supporting local businesses.

I remember just this past week watching the student's relieved faces when they came to the front of the office to collect fresh oranges. Some of them took a whole bunch of oranges, mentioning that they are excited to share these fresh oranges with their families.

The "Farm to Families" bill would allow us to expand these efforts, creating a more resilient and sustainable food system for Hawai'i. It would provide a steady market for our local farmers while ensuring that nutritious, fresh produce reaches those who need it most!

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to our shared vision of a thriving, food-secure Hawai'i. I am deeply grateful for your consideration of this important legislation and stand ready to collaborate with you in any way that may be helpful.

Mahalo nui loa & Fa'afetai tele lava,

Josephine Brown
PCNC, Kalāheo Elementary School
Kalāheo, Kaua'i, Hawai'i



Kapa`a Elementary School
4886 Kawihau Road
Kapa`a, HI 96746

January 15, 2025

Aloha,

My name is Dayson Souza-Yim and I am the Family Engagement Coordinator at Kapa`a Elementary School on Kaua`i.

On behalf of Kapa`a Elementary School and our families, I am writing to express our support of the "Farm to Families" bill, a pivotal piece of legislation that has the potential to transform our state's food security landscape. This bill will allow food distributing organizations to strengthen their partnerships with local farmers and food producers, ensuring that fresh, locally grown produce reaches families facing food insecurity.

The partnership between local farms and food organizations benefits families in our communities and our economy by:

- 1. Strengthening Hawai'i's Food Supply Chain:** By investing in local agriculture, we reduce our dependence on imported goods, creating a more resilient and sustainable food system for Hawai'i.
- 2. Supporting Local Farmers:** The bill offers a direct benefit to Hawai'i's agricultural sector, providing a steady and fair market for local produce. Farmers can plan for future growth knowing their products will feed their neighbors in need.
- 3. Enhancing Nutritional Access:** Fresh, local produce provides essential nutrients to individuals and families who may otherwise lack access to healthy food options. This not only fights hunger but also promotes long-term health and wellness in our communities.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to our shared vision of a thriving, food-secure Hawai'i. I am deeply grateful for your consideration of this important legislation and stand ready to collaborate with you in any way that may be helpful.

Me ke aloha pumehana,

Dayson Souza-Yim, Family Engagement Coordinator
Kapa`a Elementary School
Kapa`a, Kaua`i, Hawai'i

December 15, 2024

Merry Christmas & Happy Holidays!

My name is Michelle Rapozo, I am the PCNC (Parent Community Network Center) Coordinator and FRC (Family Resource Center) Director at Kapaa Middle School.

I am writing this letter in support of the "Farm to Families" bill. Food distribution organizations building and strengthening partnerships with local farmers and food producers with the ability to distribute fresh vegetables and fruits would greatly benefit our many families and community members who face daily food insecurities.

Benefits of having a partnership with local farmers and producers for our families:

1. Supporting our local farmers by providing them with steady income and fair market prices for their produce. They can plan for the future and further growth in feeding our community.
2. Investing in our local farming community helps to create and build sustainability for our island.
3. Having healthy food options by providing fresh vegetables and fruits to our students and families that do not have access to them is such a needed resource.

Being the Director of our Family Resource Center here at Kapaa Middle School. I see firsthand the heartbreak and hardships that our families struggle with. It saddens me to hear that for some of our students, the food that they get from our school pantry is the only food security they have. I also get to see the smiles, the excitement, the relief on the faces of our students parents, and grandparents. When we can get apples, oranges, sweet potatoes, or whatever produce is available, they are so very appreciative.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to having that vision of a thriving, food-secure Hawaii. I am grateful for your consideration of this important legislation. Please feel free to collaborate in any way that may be helpful.

Thank you,
Michelle Rapozo
PCNC/FRC Director
Kapaa Middle School



December 1,2024

Aloha, my name is Zongping Huang, the owner of Kauai Glory Farm. I'm writing to support "Farm to families Bill", a critical piece of legislation that will help secure a consistent market for local food producers, strengthening our community food systems and ensuring that fresh locally grown produce reaches families food insecurity.

According to my experience from January to December this year, with a some funding, my farm and Hawaii Food Bank kauai branch partnership, delivered and will be delivered totally 12,800 lbs and 2796 bags fresh farm grown produce to our kauai families in need. As a local farmer , I'm so grateful to have this great opportunity to serve our community with fresh produce. It also empowered me as a local farmer to continue to grow more produce to supply our community. So I feel the partnership between local farms and food organizations benefits for our communities and our economy by:

1. Strengthening Hawaii's food supply chain. With steady market system, will have more and more locally grown produce available form our local food hubs and families
2. Supporting local farmers . The Bill offers a direct benefit to Hawaii agricultural sector , Providing a steady and fair market for local produce. Farmers plan for future growth knowing their products will fit their neighbors in need
3. Enhancing nutritional Access: Fresh , Local produce provides essential nutrients to individuals and families who may otherwise lack access to healthy food options. This not only fights hunger but also promotes long-term health And wellness in our community

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to our shared vision of a thriving, food-secure Hawaii . I am deeply grateful for your consideration of this important legislation and stand ready to collaborate with you in any way that may be helpful.

Thank you,

Zongping Huang
Owner of Kauai Glory Farm
(808) 258-5037

January 15, 2025

Aloha,

My name is Kate Veatch, I am the PCNC at Kilauea School on Kaua'i. I help our community outreach and support by providing opportunities out in the real world showing our keiki the fundamentals of giving back and helping people succeed to make us all better as a community. Hawai'i Foodbank, being one of our biggest and most attentive partners, offering amazing local fruits and vegetables with their snack to our families has made such a great impact on our students and community. Showing that there are opportunities within our community to thrive together.

With that being said, I am writing to you with a very important request. Myself and on behalf of students and staff at, Kilauea School, want to show a supporting role for this amazing opportunity; the "**Farm to Families**" bill, which is a pivotal piece of our legislation that has tremendous potential to transform our state's food security landscape. This bill will allow food distributing organizations such as Hawai'i Foodbank to strengthen their community's foundation with local farmers and food processing, these are crucial to ensuring that fresh, locally grown produce reaches every family that may face some kind of food shortages or financial hardship.

The partnership between local farms and food distribution organizations only benefits the families in our communities and our economy by the following advantages:

1. **Strengthening Hawai'i's Food Supply Chain:**

Staying local and keeping local agriculture, we are working to reduce and can ultimately eliminate our dependence on processed and/or imported goods, this is creating a more sustainable environment and food system for Hawai'i.

2. **Supporting Local Farmers:**

The bill offers a direct benefit to Hawai'i's agricultural sector, providing a steady and fair market for local produce. Farmers can plan for future growth knowing their products will feed their communities in need.

3. **Enhancing Nutritional Access:**

Providing fresh, local produce offers better nutrition habits and essential nutrients to individuals and families who may otherwise lack access to healthy food options. This not only fights hunger but also promotes long-term healthier eating habits and a more balanced lifestyle. I know our local community and visitors can see we are paving the way by willingly being active showing support for this bill.

We can look confidently knowing this "**Farm to Families**" bill, is not a want, but a **need**, so that our keiki and their future 'ohana can thrive when they come to school ready to learn and their parents can get the best product our community can offer. Because there is nothing like aunties fresh cut fruit and vegetables - let's show others that this is the only way to the future and success of every island.

Thank you for committing to our vision and goal, for food-secure on not only Kaua'i, but the hopes of our state, Hawai'i, having the same access and quality building a great way of life worth living.

I'm grateful and excited for your consideration of this important legislation and stand ready to support and encourage others with you as you take this matter forward.

Thank you,



Kate Veatch
PCNC
Kilauea School, Kaua'i





MENTAL
HEALTH
KOKUA

Opportunities to Begin Again

December 16, 2024

To whom it may concern:

I am Wayne P. Law, Kauai County Director of Mental Health Kokua, a Hawaii Foodbank Kauai partner agency. I am writing in support of Hawaii Foodbank's funding request.

Mental Health Kokua has been a partner agency of Foodbank Kauai since 2/14/2020. Hawaii Foodbank Kauai provides the food we distribute to individuals within our 24-hour Transitional Living Program. Mental Health Kokua serves individuals with severe and persistent mental illnesses. Services include transitional housing and case management services. In the 24-hour housing program we have a capacity of 10 individuals at any given time. As they move on to lesser levels of housing care options, new individuals come into the 24-hr. house. As a result, we may serve up to 20 individuals per year. These are some of the most vulnerable individuals in our community, and who need support and skills development to enable them to ultimately live more independently. Many of them come to us from homelessness. Given their very fixed income, the assistance from the Foodbank Kauai helps stretch their food budgets and allows them to have greater access to nutritious choices. We strongly support the Foodbank Kauai's Legislative request, recognizing it to be of great value and assistance to those in our community who otherwise may suffer hunger and less consistent and nutritious meals.

Respectfully,

Wayne P. Law, MSW
Kauai County Director
Mental Health Kokua



Phone (808) 737-2523

A non-profit organization
Main Administrative Office
1221 Kapiolani Boulevard, #345
Honolulu, HI 96814
Fax (808) 734-1208

Kauai Administrative Office
3205 Akahi Street
Lihue, HI 96766
Phone (808) 632-0466



Fax (808) 632-0866

December 16, 2024

Aloha!

I am writing to submit my support of the Farm to Families bill that will allow food distributing organizations to work alongside local farmers and other food producers to provide fresh, locally grown fruits and vegetables for local families.

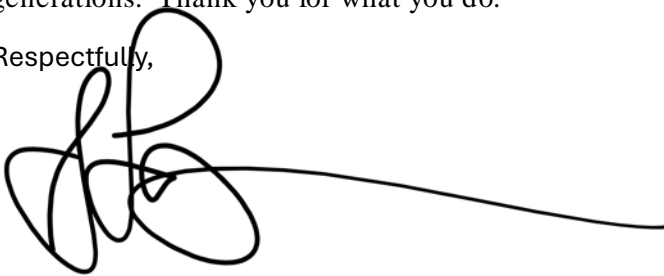
My name is Stephanie Funtanilla. I am the program manager for Nana's House, a family resource center that, among other things, provides a food pantry for families in need on the west side of Kauai. I have watched the needs of families grow despite all the efforts they make to work hard to provide for their families. As prices for food and everything rise, families resort to less nutritious foods just to be able to feed themselves. More time trying to earn a living leaves less time to plan and shop for nutritious foods. Less income means resorting to the least nutritious foods available.

I believe this is a win-win for families and producers.

1. By investing in local agriculture, we reduce our dependence on imported goods, creating a more resilient and sustainable food system for Hawai'i.
2. The bill offers a direct benefit to Hawai'i's agricultural sector, providing a steady and fair market for local produce. Farmers can plan for future growth knowing their products will feed their neighbors in need.
3. Fresh, local produce provides essential nutrients to individuals and families who may otherwise lack access to healthy food options. This not only fights hunger but also promotes long-term health and wellness in our communities.

I acknowledge that the jobs that you do are very difficult: balancing the needs of what is right for your constituency and finding a way to be financially responsible in the long run for future generations. Thank you for what you do.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a series of loops and a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Stephanie Funtanilla
Program Manager
Nana's House, Kauai

St. Michael & All Angels Episcopal Church

4364 Hardy Street • Lihue, Kauai, Hawaii 96766 • Tel: 808-245-3796 • Fax: 808-245-6173

info@stmichaels-kauai.org • www.stmichaels-kauai.org

Aloha!

My name is Deann Megonnell, I am the Senior Warden for St Michael & All Angels Episcopal Church in Lihue Hawaii. I am also the Co-Chairperson for our Loaves & Fishes food ministry.

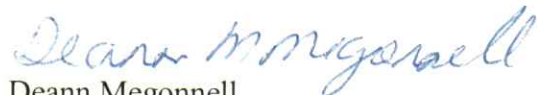
I would like to request your support of the Farm to Families Bill. St Michael & All Angels Episcopal church in Lihue Kauai All Angels Loaves & Fishes Food Pantry relies on the Hawaii Food Bank for our ministry. We have been a source of food for Kauai's Ohana members and our Kupuna for many years. Our pantry has experience firsthand the increase in demand for providing food packages to our community members in need. We currently make 180 bags a month for our two food distributions.

We fill the bags with provisions from the Hawaii Food Bank, Kauai monthly. They are an invaluable asset to our organization and provide us with a variety of canned and fresh items each week to fill our bags.

The Hawaii Food Bank on Kauai is a valuable resource for our program to receive fresh grown produce from local farmers. In addition to the nutrition of these fresh items for our clients, we are also providing support to our local farmers. The more food we can obtain from local sources the less dependent we are on imported food.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to our shared vision of a thriving, food-secure Hawai'i. I am deeply grateful for your consideration of this important legislation and stand ready to collaborate with you in any way that may be helpful.

Thank you,



Deann Megonnell
St. Michael & All Angels Church
Lihue HI





Aloha,

My name is Kurt Rutter and I am a managing partner of Tokabago Farm LLC on Kaua'i. We run an Apiary and a market garden operation supplying fresh produce and honey through Kaua'i Farm Bureau Farmers Markets and local retail outlets and restaurants. I'm writing in support of the Farm to Families legislation that will increase access to fresh local food security for all residents of Kaua'i, and especially those in at greatest risk of food insecurity. Local farmers provide access to food security through supplying local markets and particularly Farm markets where we work with the Kauai Food Bank to provide fresh food in town centers across the island. This has brought us customers who might otherwise be unable to buy locally grown food. We support food security on Kaua'i and the Kaua'i Hawai'i food Bank is a valued partner in that mission.

Sincerely,

Kurt Rutter

Tokabago Farm LLC

464 Molo St.

Kapaa, HI 96746

tokabago@gmail.com

(808) 631-9131



To: The Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment (AEN)
From: Sherry Pollack, Co-Founder, 350Hawaii.org
Date: Monday, February 3, 2025, 1:02pm

In strong support of SB1250

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and members of the AEN committee,

I am Co-Founder of the Hawaii chapter of 350.org, the largest international organization dedicated to fighting climate change. 350Hawaii.org **strongly supports SB1250** that establishes the Hawaii Farm to Families Program to alleviate food shortages in the State.

Many families in Hawaii struggle to put food on the table on a consistent basis. This measure is a wonderful idea that supports our farmers and at the same time helps our local families in need by providing local, fresh, healthy options. Efforts to support our farmers also builds our resiliency and avoids the greenhouse gases that would have been emitted from shipping in food.

Please pass **SB1250** so that we all may reap these benefits.

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

Sherry Pollack
Co-Founder, 350Hawaii.org



THE FOOD BASKET

HAWAI'I ISLAND'S FOOD BANK

February 2, 2025

To: The Honorable Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair
The Honorable Senator Herbery M. "Tim" Richards, III Vice Chair
Committee on Agriculture and Environment

From: Kristin Frost Albrecht, Executive Director
The Food Basket, Hawai'i Island's Food Bank

Testimony in Strong Support of SB1250, Relating to Farm to Families

Aloha Chair Gabbard and Vice Chair Richards,

My name is Kristin Frost Albrecht, and I am the Executive Director of The Food Basket Inc., Hawai'i Island's Food Bank. Our mission is to "End hunger in Hawai'i County". We strongly SUPPORT this bill.

On Hawai'i Island we are experiencing an alarming 40% food insecurity rate with the number of residents in need of food assistance, rapidly surpassing the numbers served during the pandemic. Statewide, food insecurity affects nearly one in three individuals in Hawai'i – a critical level that is only increasing due to escalating living costs. As a food bank that has served our island residents through four federally declared disasters, we have relied heavily on our local producers to provide enough food to respond to the immediacy of dire need due to an often-tenuous supply chain of food that is imported from 2500 miles across the ocean. The Farm to Families program would provide essential funding for food banks to purchase from local farmers and producers, improving emergency food access, boosting local agriculture, and strengthening Hawai'i's food system during the ongoing economic crisis that is affecting so many families across the state.

The Food Basket has a strong history and commitment to supporting local farmers and producers with our upstream approach to ending hunger through innovative programs, including the administration of our statewide DA BUX Double Up Food Bucks program, Ho'olaha Ka Hua DA BOX community supported agriculture program, Kūpuna Fresh, and Poi Joy, to name a few. Each of these programs supports local farmers and producers with the purchase of Hawai'i grown food at a fair and equitable price which in turn helps to feed our struggling families, from keiki to kūpuna, with healthy nutritious food while strengthening and uplifting our local economy.

We respectfully ask your committee to pass this bill to support our most vulnerable residents and improve food security for all in Hawai'i. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Kristin Frost Albrecht
Executive Director, The Food Basket Inc., Hawai'i Island's Food Bank

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DIRECTOR

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ALBRECHT

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WWW.HAWAIIFOODBASKET.ORG

Administration and East Hawai'i Warehouse
40 Holomua Street, Hilo, HI 96720
808-933-6030 Phone | 808-934-0701 Fax

West Hawai'i Warehouse
73-4161 Ulu Wini Place, Kailua-Kona, HI 96740
808-322-1418 Phone | 808-322-7373 Fax

SB-1250

Submitted on: 2/1/2025 10:33:08 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/3/2025 1:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Scott Crawford	Testifying for Hawaii Farmers Union - Hana Chapter	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing on behalf of the Hana Chapter of the Hawaii Farmers Union and our 100+ chapter members to express our support for the Farm to Families program to fund food banks in the State to purchase, store, and transport fresh, Hawaii-grown or -produced food to food insecure communities. While Hana does not have a food bank itself, we have partnered with the Maui Food Bank to do food box distributions through the Hana Farmers Market, and now through the Hana Hub facility. We also intend to utilize the Hana Hub facility to enable East Maui farmers to aggregate their produce for minimal processing and cooperatively transport to central Maui, including to the Maui Food Bank. Having funding support for the Farm to Families program would help ensure markets for the East Maui producers going to the island residents most in need.

THE KŪPUNA CAUCUS



March 22, 2024

TO: COMMITTEE ON Agriculture and Environment
Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair
Senator Tim Richards, Vice Chair

CONCERNING: SB1250 Relating to Farm to Families

POSITION: STRONG SUPPORT

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and Members of the Committee:

The Kūpuna Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawai‘i has an enrollment of some 2,700 members. We focus on issues relating to the health and welfare of seniors in our State (and beyond).

We urge your support for SB 1250. Seniors identified Food Insecurity as a top 5 issue for them in a survey this summer. Seniors whether living alone or in extended ohana live on fixed incomes which have not kept up with the explosion in food prices. Seniors often experience lack of transportation options when they do seek out

home grown produce that many grew up cooking and sharing with their family.

But there is a bigger issue. The traditional foods of any culture are a big part of that culture. Are the keiki losing this part of their history. Providing kupuna with the fresh local produce that they learned to cook from their kupuna will allow them to share with their cooking skills and recipes with the next generations. In a world of fast food and genetically altered food, the ability for the Auntie to teach grandchildren how to cook traditional foods from whatever culture came is priceless. A culture is carried on by its food.

Please approve this Bill as a step in preserving each of our individual cultures.

Larry Smith

Chairperson

Kūpuna Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawai‘i

SB-1250

Submitted on: 2/1/2025 1:44:35 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/3/2025 1:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Yvette Kay	Testifying for Indivisible Hawai'i	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support increasing the ability of food banks to purchase locally grown food is a win-win for our communities and farmers. One major challenge local farmers face is access to markets. This will help grow our local food and agriculture economy while providing our communities with nutritious food during times of crisis.

Preparing Hawai'i's families in the wake of disaster, food banks rely almost exclusively on private donations and grants, even though local governments rely heavily on them during times of crisis. The Farm to Families program would provide funding for purchasing from local farmers, improving emergency food access for families and opening up a local market for farmers during times of economic crisis.



HAWAII CROP IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION

SB1250 – In Support
Relating to Farm to Families
Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment

Date: Monday, February 3, 2025
Time: 1:02 PM
Place: Conference Room 224

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii Crop Improvement Association (HCIA) appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony **in support of SB1250**, which establishes the Hawaii Farm to Families Program to alleviate food shortages in the State and requires reports to the Legislature prior to the Regular Sessions of 2026 and 2027.

This bill has the dual benefit of addressing food insecurity and supporting the local agricultural industry. The importance of increasing the availability and access to fresh and nutritious food is clear, especially for the young children who represent our state's most vulnerable populations. To do so, while also creating direct opportunities for local farmers to support their operations during economically challenging times, is a win-win proposition.

With its wide-reaching benefits, we urge you to please pass SB1250. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support.

The Hawaii Crop Improvement Association is a Hawaii-based non-profit organization that promotes modern agriculture to help farmers and communities succeed. Through education, collaboration, and advocacy, we work to ensure a safe and sustainable food supply, support responsible farming practices, and build a healthy economy.



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COVID-19 Response

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Hawai'i Drug & Alcohol-Free Coalitions

Hawai'i Farm to School Network

Hawai'i Oral Health Coalition

Hawai'i Public Health Training Hui

Healthy Eating + Active Living

Kūpuna Collective/Healthy Aging &
Community Living

Public Health Workforce Development

Date: February 1, 2025

To: Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair
Senator Herbert M. "Tim" Richards, Vice Chair
Members of the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment

Re: Support for SB 1250, Relating to Farm to Families

Hrg: February 3, 2025, 1:02 pm, Conference Room 224

Hawai'i Public Health Institute (HIPHI)¹ and the Healthy Eating, Active Living² (HEAL) Coalition is in **support of SB 1250**, which establishes the Hawai'i Farm to Families Program to increase locally grown or produced food in our food bank system.

One in three families are food insecure in Hawai'i. This results in over 150,000 people relying on the food bank system for assistance each month. The food bank system provides a very important social service to our community and it's essential that we help fund their efforts.

Increased Demand Requires Increased Investment

The Hawai'i Food Bank's dramatic rise in food distribution – from 12.5 million pounds in 2018 to 21.2 million pounds in 2024 – reflects a growing crisis of food insecurity in our islands.³ This 70% increase represents thousands more local families struggling to put food on their tables. Given our state's high cost of living and dependence on imported food, we must invest in strengthening the food bank system's operations to ensure this essential service can continue supporting our island 'ohana.

A \$2 million state investment through SB 1250 would represent less than 5% of the food bank network's annual operating expenses, yet could significantly

¹ Hawai'i Public Health Institute's mission is to advance health and wellness for the people and islands of Hawai'i. We do this through expanding our understanding of what creates health of people and place, fostering partnerships, and cultivating programs to improve policies, systems, and the environments where people live, learn, work, age, and play.

² The Healthy Eating + Active Living (HEAL) Coalition, formerly known as the Obesity Prevention Task Force, was created by the legislature in 2012 and is comprised of over 60 statewide organizations. The HEAL Coalition works to make recommendations to reshape Hawai'i's school, work, community, and health care environments, making healthier lifestyles obtainable for all Hawai'i residents.

³ Hawai'i Food Bank Annual Report - 2018.

https://hawaiiifoodbank.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/HawaiiFoodbank_AnnualReport_2018_web.pdf

⁴ Hawai'i Food Bank Annual Report - 2024.

https://hawaiiifoodbank.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/HawaiiFoodbank_AnnualReport_2024.pdf



strengthen its ability to serve our communities. This modest initial investment would demonstrate Hawai'i's commitment to addressing food insecurity while helping ensure the sustainability of this vital emergency food network.

Fresh Produce in High Demand

Hawai'i's food banks and pantries face a high demand for fresh produce, but supply falls short due to limited funding and distribution challenges.⁵ Given the limited availability, there are hours-long lines at food distribution sites that offer fresh produce. Investing in farm-to-families programs would help to create a steady local supply of nutritious produce, improving food security and public health across the islands.

Local Investments Help our Economy

A \$2 million investment in Hawai'i's food bank system creates ripple effects throughout our local economy. When we purchase from local farmers and producers, those dollars circulate within our communities rather than flowing to continental suppliers. This strengthens our agricultural sector, creates local jobs, and helps build a more resilient food system for our islands.

When families receive adequate nutrition through the food bank, they can better focus on work, education, and other activities that contribute to our economy, reducing the long-term costs associated with food insecurity.

We urge you to support SB 1250 to strengthen Hawai'i's emergency food network and help more families access the nutritious food they need. This investment in our food banks is an important step toward reducing hunger in our islands.

Mahalo,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Nate Hix'.

Nate Hix
Director of Policy and Advocacy

⁵KHON. 12-2-24. "A guide to what Hawai'i's food banks need this season."
<https://www.khon2.com/local-news/a-guide-to-what-hawai%CA%BBis-food-banks-need-this-season/>



Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment

Hawai'i Alliance for Progressive Action (HAPA) Strongly Supports: SB1250

February 3rd, 2025 at 1:00pm; Conference Room 224

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards and members of the committee,

As a member of the Hawaii Hunger Action Network, HAPA strongly supports SB1250. According to a recent report by the Hawaii Food Bank, **one in three households in Hawaii has reports being food insecure**¹. Additional reporting from the Aloha United Way, just released in January 2025, further highlights the need for systemic changes to address the struggles of Hawaii's A.L.I.C.E. (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) population. **Nearly half (46%) of ALICE households struggle with consistent food access, compared to 28% statewide.**² Yet too often Food Banks are torn between choosing cheaper, less healthy food to feed more recipients and the ability to provide nutritious, locally grown or produced foods.

Increasing the ability of food banks to purchase locally grown food is a win-win for our communities and farmers. For local farmers, accessing new markets can be a challenge. Creating opportunities to connect our most vulnerable communities with locally grown or produced food will help grow our local food and agriculture economy while providing our communities with nutritious food during times of hardship or crisis.

Preparing Hawai'i's families in the wake of disaster, food banks rely almost exclusively on private donations and grants, even though local governments rely heavily on them during times of crisis. The Farm to Families program would provide funding for purchasing from local farmers, improving emergency food access for families and opening up a local market for farmers during times of economic challenges or crisis. I urge you to please support SB1250.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anne Frederick', written in a cursive style.

Anne Frederick,
Executive Director

¹ <https://hawaiifoodbank.org/food-insecurity/>

² <https://www.auw.org/about/alice-initiative/alice-reports/>

RE: Support for SB 1250, Relating to Farm to Families

Dear RICHARDS, AQUINO, CHANG, GABBARD, MCKELVEY, San
Buenaventura

My name is Farley Bayudan and I am Leader of City of Joy Ohana Food Distribution.

I am writing with an urgent request for your support of the "Farm to Families" bill, a pivotal piece of legislation that has the potential to transform our state's food security landscape. This bill will allow food distributing organizations to strengthen their partnerships with local farmers and food producers, ensuring that fresh, locally grown produce reaches families facing food insecurity.

The partnership between local farms and food organizations benefits families in our communities and our economy by:

1. **Strengthening Hawai'i's Food Supply Chain:** By investing in local agriculture, we reduce our dependence on imported goods, creating a more resilient and sustainable food system for Hawai'i.
2. **Supporting Local Farmers:** The bill offers a direct benefit to Hawai'i's agricultural sector, providing a steady and fair market for local produce. Farmers can plan for future growth knowing their products will feed their neighbors in need.
3. **Enhancing Nutritional Access:** Fresh, local produce provides essential nutrients to individuals and families who may otherwise lack access to healthy food options. This not only fights hunger but also promotes long-term health and wellness in our communities.

Our Ohana Food Distribution has been serving in the Waianae Community since 1996 on the first Saturday of each month. We service

approximately 160 families each month. Many of our special guest receiving these blessings from the Hawaii Food Bank are elderly or considered homeless! The passage of this bill would be a tremendous blessing for our Ohana in 96792!

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to our shared vision of a thriving, food-secure Hawai'i. I am deeply grateful for your consideration of this important legislation.

Mahalo – Farley Bayudan



HAWAII APPLESEED
CENTER FOR LAW & ECONOMIC JUSTICE

Testimony of the Hawai‘i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice
Support for SB 1250 – Relating to Farm to Families
Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment
Monday, February 3, 2025, at 1:02pm

Dear Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of **SB 1250**, which would support a Farm to Families program. This bill would appropriate funds to alleviate food shortages in the State by ensuring fresh produce is directed to families in need.

A strong emergency food system is a critical pillar of food equity and resiliency, which is why we support instituting a Farm to Families program at the state level. This legislation would strengthen local food supply chains, from guaranteeing that nutritious food is available to more families, to supporting the local agricultural economy, to reducing farm food waste.

Fresh, local produce is essential for improving community health, yet is often out of reach for many families struggling to afford life in Hawai‘i. This program would help make healthy, whole foods available to more people, thereby alleviating hunger and preventing long-term health issues like diabetes, heart disease, stroke, and depression.¹

Farm to families not only strengthens Hawai‘i’s food supply chain but also provides a backup, or “safety net” market for local farmers during times of economic crisis or natural disaster. When these events strike, the emergency food system becomes a lifeline both for families seeking food, and for farmers seeking markets when tourism plummets. Most recently, the Maui wildfires contributed to a spike in food insecurity—as many as 49% of Maui’s population.² It was the food banks and distribution partners who stepped in—institutions that historically have relied almost entirely on charitable contributions.

By strengthening the partnerships between local farmers and our food banks, we are setting up a food system that is not as reliant on imports and puts back money in our local economy. Our state has set goals to double our local food production by 2030; passing this bill is one step to getting us there.³

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB 1250. We are pleased that the Hawai‘i legislature is paying attention to improving food security. By investing in this initiative, we can create a stronger, healthier, and more equitable Hawai‘i for generations to come.

¹ Food Research & Action Center (FRAC), “Hunger & Health: The Impact of Poverty, Food Insecurity, and Poor Nutrition on Health and Well-Being,” FRAC, December 2017, p. 1-2.

² Hawai‘i Foodbank, “The State of Food Insecurity in Hawai‘i,” Hawai‘i Foodbank, May 2024, p. 6.

³ <https://alohachallenge.hawaii.gov/pages/local-food-production-and-consumption>



January 31, 2025

Dear Chair Gabbard and Vice Chair Richards,

RE: Strong Support for SB1250, Relating to Farm to Families

My name is Chana Makale'a Dudoit Ane and I am the Executive Director of the Living Pono Project. I am writing with an urgent request for your support of the "Farm to Families" bill, a pivotal piece of legislation that has the potential to transform our state's food security landscape. This bill will allow food distributing organizations to strengthen their partnerships with local farmers and food producers, ensuring that fresh, locally grown produce reaches families facing food insecurity.

The Living Pono Project committed to supporting the most vulnerable and disadvantaged populations by fostering economic resilience in the aftermath of the Maui Fires. Through our proposed initiatives, we aim to prioritize public service by advocating for food access and distribution by promoting economic development through business education programs and investment in critical infrastructure for our agriculture sector.

We currently support over 30 farmers affected by the Maui Fires through our produce purchasing program. Sourcing over 16,000 pounds of produce from local farmers and donate it directly to over 700 families per month affected by the Maui fires. This is done in Partnership with the Maui Food Bank, Hawaii Community Foundation, Private donors and other Maui Non-profits.

The partnership between local farms and food organizations benefits families in our communities and our economy by:

- Strengthening Hawai'i's Food Supply Chain
- Supporting Local Farmers
- Enhancing Nutritional Access

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to our shared vision of a thriving, food-secure Hawai'i. I am deeply grateful for your consideration of this important legislation.

Malama Ola (Be well/take care)

Chana Makale'a Dudoit Ane
Executive Director



To: Senate Agriculture and Environment Committee

Hearing Date/Time: Monday, February 3, 2025

Re: Testimony in Strong Support of SB1250, Relating to Farm to Families

From: Andrew Ogata, Hawai'i Health & Harm Reduction Center

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and Committee Members,

The Hawai'i Health & Harm Reduction Center (HHRC) strongly supports SB1250, which supports food banks to purchase from local farmers, with expenditures managed via the Department of Agriculture's request for proposals process.

Food insecurity was already a pressing challenge in Hawai'i prior to the COVID-19 pandemic and has since escalated to a crisis level. Many of the communities we serve—those living with or affected by HIV, hepatitis, substance use, and members of the transgender, LGBTQ, and Native Hawaiian communities—are disproportionately impacted by food insecurity and other social determinants of health.

At HHRC, our mission is to reduce harm, promote health, create wellness, and fight stigma in Hawai'i and the Pacific. During 2020 and 2021, we partnered with the Hawai'i Foodbank to conduct food distributions across O'ahu, helping to disseminate more than 500,000 pounds of food to thousands of families. We continue this partnership today, distributing over 140,000 pounds of food annually. Through this work, we witness firsthand the desperation of families seeking healthy, fresh foods they otherwise could not afford.

To adequately address food insecurity across our islands, food banks need more than just donations, they need sustainable resources to ensure that fresh, nutritious food is consistently available. Investing in local farmers through this bill not only supports food security but also strengthens our local agricultural economy.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify. We urge your support of SB1250 to help build a healthier, more resilient Hawai'i.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Andrew Ogata

Director of Development

Hawai'i Health & Harm Reduction Center

Aloha mai kākou, and mahalo nui for this opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB1250 and the establishment of a Farm to Families program.

My name is Kelsey Ann Kamanani Conklin and I am a health policy advisor, food systems planner, and Kanaka ʻŌiwi with over a decade of experience in public health research and community-based work in Hawaiʻi and the United States. I have rigorously researched farm to food assistance programs for the last two years and can tell you that, without a doubt, these programs are critical opportunities to simultaneously improve food security, public health, cultural connectedness, and local food economies while reducing food loss and food waste.

As outlined in the text of the bill, there are many reasons that establishing this program in Hawaiʻi should be a no-brainer. I want to highlight two more that may be less obvious and suggest three small changes that would make the program even more effective:

First, Farm to Families would provide upfront, guaranteed funding, allowing food banks, pantries and other buyers to proactively partner with producers to contract and plant in advance. This reduces risk for producers and helps them scale up their businesses, which is essential for growing a larger and more resilient agricultural sector in our islands. Food banks can be a “buyer of last resort,” purchasing imperfect or near-expiration foods at a discount, but it’s even better if they can pay producers a fair price and both parties know their needs will be met.

Second, by facilitating local sourcing and increasing buying power, Farm to Families would enable food banks and pantries to purchase foods that are culturally relevant for local communities. Food is a vital component of culture and, for many Indigenous people, food is medicine and a cornerstone of physical and spiritual health. For Kanaka ʻŌiwi, staple crops like kalo and ʻulu are embedded in our creation stories and lessons of compassion, selflessness, reciprocity, and right relationship. Many of the processes used to prepare and eat traditional foods are also important cultural practices that support social connection and generational knowledge transfer. The same is true for many of the other racial and ethnic groups who call Hawaiʻi home, but much of the food donated to or available for food banks and pantries to purchase lacks this cultural resonance. In my experiences distributing food throughout Oʻahu and Maui, I have heard recipients gasp and cry out in joy at seeing foods like poi, ʻulu, apple banana, kabocha, bok choy, eggplant, and long beans in their produce bags. These foods do more than fill bellies: for one mom I met, poi calmed her baby’s upset stomach when nothing else would. Another mom shared that her kids ate two or three times as many vegetables when they had ʻulu hummus to dip them in. One older man told me garlic bok choy was the first dish he learned to make after his wife passed and he had to cook for himself, so seeing bok choy in his produce bag made him feel more confident he could care of himself that week.

We must ensure that access to these nourishing, traditional foods is not reserved exclusively for the wealthy. As key safety net programs like SNAP, WIC, Medicare, and Medicaid are threatened and cost of living increases, Hawai'i residents will have even less money to spend on food. We must build up every resource we can to protect our health, food system resilience, and economy.

As it's currently written, SB1250 will do much to support local communities and local economies. I urge you to support this bill and to please consider amending it to:

- 1) In addition to food banks, allow food pantries and other agencies who distribute directly to communities to use the funds;
- 2) Allow these organizations to use the funds to purchase additional cold storage, such as coolers, freezers, and refrigerated trucks, and pay for the electricity and fuel needed to run that equipment; and
- 3) Allow these organizations to use the funds for the additional part- or full-time staff who will be needed to operationalize Farm to Families, such as by building and sustaining relationships with producers and managing supply chain logistics.

These small changes would help organizations build out the efficient infrastructure needed to make Farm to Families even more successful and sustainable in the long run.

Again, mahalo nui for this opportunity to provide testimony regarding SB1250 and the Farm to Families program. Should you have any questions regarding this testimony please feel free to contact me at the information provided in my written testimony.

Me ka ha'aha'a,

K.A. Kamanani Conklin, MPH

Nani@mahinahualani.com

SB-1250

Submitted on: 1/31/2025 2:55:46 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/3/2025 1:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jody Smith	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha!

My name is Jody Smith. I am a retiree with 18 years of experience with the sustainable agriculture program at UH Manoa College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources. I regularly donate to and volunteer with the Hawai'i Food Bank. I help out with the Food 4 Keiki Program, the CSFP Kupuna Food Box Program, and the food distribution program operated by Kings Cathedral in Aina Haina.

As a HFB volunteer, I unpack boxes and boxes of beautiful fruits and produce grown by our local farmers. I help fill and hand out bags of vegetables. I enjoy watching our local clients growing excited by the variety and selection of popular vegetables (like bok choy, daikon, bitter melon) and local tropical fruits (papaya, pineapple) — the flavors of our islands. The partnership between the Hawaii Food Bank and the Hawaii Farm Bureau has allowed us to distribute this delicious and nourishing fresh produce.

Continuation and expansion of this program via the "Farm to Families" bill will bring multiple benefits to our state.

Please provide full support for the the "Farm to Families" bill, a pivotal piece of legislation that has the potential to transform our state's food security landscape. This bill will allow food distributing organizations to strengthen their partnerships with local farmers and food producers, ensuring that fresh, locally grown produce reaches families facing food insecurity.

As a former agricultural professional in Hawaii, I understand the importance of growing, purchasing and distributing locally grown foods.

Investing in local agriculture reduces the state's dependence on imported food (now estimated at 85% — extraordinarily high).

With a reliable market for their produce, Hawaii's farmers are better able to plan for and supply delicious and nutritious food.

Fresh, local produce provides essential nutrients to individuals and families who may otherwise lack access to healthy food options, fighting hunger and promoting long-term health and wellness in our communities.

Please support the "Farm to Families" bill.

Mahalo nui loa

Jody Smith

Honolulu 96825

SB-1250

Submitted on: 1/31/2025 3:14:26 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/3/2025 1:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Molly Mamaril	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Gabbard and Vice Chair Richards,

My name is Molly Mamaril and I am a Kaimukī, O‘ahu resident.

I am writing with an urgent request for your support of the "Farm to Families" bill, a pivotal piece of legislation that has the potential to transform our state’s food security landscape. This bill will allow food distributing organizations to strengthen their partnerships with local farmers and food producers, ensuring that fresh, locally grown produce reaches families facing food insecurity.

The partnership between local farms and food organizations benefits families in our communities and our economy by:

1. **Strengthening Hawai‘i’s Food Supply Chain:** By investing in local agriculture, we reduce our dependence on imported goods, creating a more resilient and sustainable food system for Hawai‘i.
2. **Supporting Local Farmers:** The bill offers a direct benefit to Hawai‘i’s agricultural sector, providing a steady and fair market for local produce. Farmers can plan for future growth knowing their products will feed their neighbors in need.
3. **Enhancing Nutritional Access:** Fresh, local produce provides essential nutrients to individuals and families who may otherwise lack access to healthy food options. This not only fights hunger but also promotes long-term health and wellness in our communities.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to our shared vision of a thriving, food-secure Hawai‘i. I am deeply grateful for your consideration of this important legislation.

Molly Mamaril

SB-1250

Submitted on: 1/31/2025 3:19:16 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/3/2025 1:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Joseph Keawe'aimoku Kaholokula	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

RE: Support for B1250 Relating to Farm to Families

Aloha e Chair Sen. Mike Gabbard a me Vice Chair Sen. Herbert M. "Tim" Richards, III

I am Joseph Keawe'aimoku Kaholokula, PhD. Aside from being on the Board of Directors for the Hawai'i Food Bank, I am also a licensed clinical psychologist and professor and chair of Native Hawaiian Health at the John A. Burns School of Medicine. I am providing you with this strong letter of support as a private citizen to request your support of the "Farm to Families" bill, a pivotal piece of legislation that has the potential to transform our state's food security landscape.

This bill will allow food-distributing organizations to strengthen their partnerships with local farmers and food producers, ensuring that fresh, locally grown produce reaches families facing food insecurity, which is 30% of Hawai'i's population.

The partnership between local farms and food organizations benefits families in our communities and our economy by:

1. **Strengthening Hawai'i's Food Supply Chain:** By investing in local agriculture, we reduce our dependence on imported goods, creating a more resilient and sustainable food system for Hawai'i.
2. **Supporting Local Farmers:** The bill offers a direct benefit to Hawai'i's agricultural sector, providing a steady and fair market for local produce. Farmers can plan for future growth knowing their products will feed their neighbors in need.
3. **Enhancing Nutritional Access:** Fresh, local produce provides essential nutrients to individuals and families who may otherwise lack access to healthy food options. This not only fights hunger but also promotes long-term health and wellness in our communities.

As a behavioral health provider and health disparities researcher, I am well aware of the psychological problems and chronic disease risks associated with food insecurity and poor access to healthy food options. This bill will help to ensure access to healthy food options for those most in need of this support.

Mahalo nui for your leadership and commitment to our shared vision of a thriving, food-secure Hawai'i. I am grateful for your consideration of this important legislation.

SB-1250

Submitted on: 1/31/2025 3:29:37 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/3/2025 1:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Theresa M Thompson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support SB1250 RELATING TO FARM TO FAMILIES.

Mahalo,

Theresa Thompson

SB-1250

Submitted on: 1/31/2025 5:11:56 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/3/2025 1:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Randy Cabral	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Strong support

SB-1250

Submitted on: 1/31/2025 5:58:13 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/3/2025 1:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
tia pearson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The Farm to Families program would provide funding for purchasing from local farmers, improving emergency food access for families and opening up a local market for farmers during times of economic crisis.

SB-1250

Submitted on: 2/1/2025 3:48:57 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/3/2025 1:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kira Yeomans	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Senator Mike Gabbard and Herbert M. "Tim" Richards, III,

My name is Kira Yeomans and I am testifying as a individual citizen.

I am writing with an urgent request for your support of the "Farm to Families" bill, a pivotal piece of legislation that has the potential to transform our state's food security landscape. This bill will allow food distributing organizations to strengthen their partnerships with local farmers and food producers, ensuring that fresh, locally grown produce reaches families facing food insecurity.

The partnership between local farms and food organizations benefits families in our communities and our economy by:

1. **Strengthening Hawai'i's Food Supply Chain:** By investing in local agriculture, we reduce our dependence on imported goods, creating a more resilient and sustainable food system for Hawai'i.
2. **Supporting Local Farmers:** The bill offers a direct benefit to Hawai'i's agricultural sector, providing a steady and fair market for local produce. Farmers can plan for future growth knowing their products will feed their neighbors in need.
3. **Enhancing Nutritional Access:** Fresh, local produce provides essential nutrients to individuals and families who may otherwise lack access to healthy food options. This not only fights hunger but also promotes long-term health and wellness in our communities.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to our shared vision of a thriving, food-secure Hawai'i. I am deeply grateful for your consideration of this important legislation.

Mahalo,

Kira

SB-1250

Submitted on: 2/1/2025 5:19:51 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/3/2025 1:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Laura Ellen Maile Pokipala	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please take into consideration the state of the world, and our need to focus on the people living in the State of Hawai'i. We must find relief for those who are barely keeping a roof over the heads of their families. By allowing SB 1250 to move forward it will give the state a path to food security, the ability to care for the land we must cherish and care for if we are to continue living in paradise, and it will provide a path to being less dependent on food coming into the islands at a cost to our local farmers and ultimately to the residents of Hawai'i. Please make better use of the talents and treasures we have among our own residents. Thank you.

SB-1250

Submitted on: 2/1/2025 5:47:29 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/3/2025 1:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Melanie Kim	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill that will provide resources for foodbanks to purchase homegrown food from local farmer's and provide this food to at risk Hawaii's at risk population for food insecurity. It's a win win for all , providing nutritious food to families who otherwise could not afford it and supports Hawaii's farmers to grow and sell their products in Hawaii.

SB-1250

Submitted on: 2/1/2025 2:57:46 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/3/2025 1:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kerry Arlene Beane	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am a farm advisor and member of the Hawai'i Farmers Union on Maui; Mauna Kahawalai Chapter. I'm writing in support of SB1250. Community efforts during COVID taught us a lot about what can be done in a crisis and revealed unnecessary roadblocks in need of removal. It showed us what our local farmers really do to make our communities food secure. Many of us would prefer to see Hawai'i become fully food enabled for security- no matter what global supply chains do. Every effort should now be made to improve access to locally grown food statewide. Please support this bill to help the Food Bank purchase and provide more locally grown food directly from farmers. Let's consider what has been learned through crisis, and assure- in every way possible- that our systems don't obstruct the greater objective of 100% food security for Hawai'i.

Mahalo,

Kerry A Beane, MS

SB-1250

Submitted on: 2/1/2025 1:21:36 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/3/2025 1:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
janice palma-glennie	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

Our state needs to incrise the ability of food banks to purchase locally grown food. meanwhile, through this effort, our local farmers and ag industry are supported.

it's also known that a 3-day lack of supply of food could cause anarchy on our remote islands. supporting local farmers supports our abilty to be more sustainable if ships and planes aren't able to service our state.

As we've learned the hard way, not being more self-sustainable and ready for disaster means heartache and pain for our residents.

mahalo and best,

janice palma-glennie

kailua-kona

SB-1250

Submitted on: 2/1/2025 1:30:30 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/3/2025 1:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alexandra Perez Urbina	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hello,

My name is Alexandra Perez Urbina, and I am not a resident of Hawai'a, but I am a frequent visitor and love the people and the land. For this reason I ask that you please support SB1250. Increasing the ability of food banks to purchase locally grown food is a win-win for our communities and farmers. One major challenge local farmers face is access to markets. This will help grow our local food and agriculture economy while providing our communities with nutritious food during times of crisis.

Preparing Hawai'i's families in the wake of disaster, food banks rely almost exclusively on private donations and grants, even though local governments rely heavily on them during times of crisis. The Farm to Families program would provide funding for purchasing from local farmers, improving emergency food access for families and opening up a local market for farmers during times of economic crisis.

Peacefully,

Alexandra

SB-1250

Submitted on: 2/1/2025 2:43:50 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/3/2025 1:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Aviva Libitsky	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support SB1250. Increasing the ability of food banks to purchase locally grown food is a win-win for our communities and farmers. One major challenge local farmers face is access to markets. This will help grow our local food and agriculture economy while providing our communities with nutritious food during times of crisis.

Preparing Hawai'i's families in the wake of disaster, food banks rely almost exclusively on private donations and grants, even though local governments rely heavily on them during times of crisis. The Farm to Families program would provide funding for purchasing from local farmers, improving emergency food access for families and opening up a local market for farmers during times of economic crisis.

Mahalo,

Aviva Libitsky

SB-1250

Submitted on: 2/1/2025 12:24:31 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/3/2025 1:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tamara Luthy	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support SB1250. Increasing the ability of food banks to purchase locally grown food is a win-win for our communities and farmers. One major challenge local farmers face is access to markets. This will help grow our local food and agriculture economy while providing our communities with nutritious food during times of crisis.

Preparing Hawai'i's families in the wake of disaster, food banks rely almost exclusively on private donations and grants, even though local governments rely heavily on them during times of crisis. The Farm to Families program would provide funding for purchasing from local farmers, improving emergency food access for families and opening up a local market for farmers during times of economic crisis.

SB-1250

Submitted on: 2/1/2025 12:23:50 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/3/2025 1:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Keila Paahana	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this. Farm to families to help with food insecurity

SB-1250

Submitted on: 2/1/2025 12:39:41 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/3/2025 1:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shay Chan Hodges	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support SB1250. Increasing the ability of food banks to purchase locally grown food is a win-win for our communities and farmers. One major challenge local farmers face is access to markets. This will help grow our local food and agriculture economy while providing our communities with nutritious food during times of crisis.

Preparing Hawai'i's families in the wake of disaster, food banks rely almost exclusively on private donations and grants, even though local governments rely heavily on them during times of crisis. The Farm to Families program would provide funding for purchasing from local farmers, improving emergency food access for families and opening up a local market for farmers during times of economic crisis.

SB-1250

Submitted on: 2/1/2025 12:44:25 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/3/2025 1:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Suellen Barton	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please vote in support of this bill

SB-1250

Submitted on: 2/1/2025 12:42:08 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/3/2025 1:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
John Witeck	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support an effective farms to family program to best provide adequate food security and supplies for our local population. We cannot rely on food shipments and imports in times of bad storms and other natural disasters. Please pass this measure!

SB-1250

Submitted on: 2/1/2025 2:57:19 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/3/2025 1:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Richard Janik	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Increasing the ability of food banks to purchase locally grown food is a win-win for our communities and farmers.

I fully support this measure.

Richard Janik, MD

Lihue, Kauai

SB-1250

Submitted on: 2/1/2025 2:13:01 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/3/2025 1:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
fred hofer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

strongly support this, the local food bank buying local produce will lead to even poor people have access to fresh produce and those farmers that don't have time to sit at markets, yet are too small to supply super markets, will have guaranteed business 🍊👏🏠🌈

F Fred Hofer

SB-1250

Submitted on: 2/1/2025 1:05:54 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/3/2025 1:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nicole LeClaire	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Preparing Hawai'i's families in the wake of disaster, food banks rely almost exclusively on private donations and grants, even though local governments rely heavily on them during times of crisis. The Farm to Families program would provide funding for purchasing from local farmers, improving emergency food access for families and opening up a local market for farmers during times of economic crisis.

SB-1250

Submitted on: 2/1/2025 1:41:58 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/3/2025 1:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Caroline Barbeau	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill.

SB-1250

Submitted on: 2/1/2025 4:06:33 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/3/2025 1:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
B.A. McClintock	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support SB1250. Increasing the ability of food banks to purchase locally grown food is a win-win for our communities and farmers. One major challenge local farmers face is access to markets. This will help grow our local food and agriculture economy while providing our communities with nutritious food during times of crisis.

Preparing Hawai'i's families in the wake of disaster, food banks rely almost exclusively on private donations and grants, even though local governments rely heavily on them during times of crisis. The Farm to Families program would provide funding for purchasing from local farmers, improving emergency food access for families and opening up a local market for farmers during times of economic crisis. Mahalo.

SB-1250

Submitted on: 2/1/2025 5:07:35 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/3/2025 1:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nalani	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e,

Please support SB1250. Increasing the ability of food banks to purchase locally grown food is a win-win for our communities and farmers. One major challenge local farmers face is access to markets. This will help grow our local food and agriculture economy while providing our communities with nutritious food during times of crisis.

Preparing Hawai'i's families in the wake of disaster, food banks rely almost exclusively on private donations and grants, even though local governments rely heavily on them during times of crisis. The Farm to Families program would provide funding for purchasing from local farmers, improving emergency food access for families and opening up a local market for farmers during times of economic crisis.

mahalo,

Nalani A. From Lahaina

SB-1250

Submitted on: 2/1/2025 7:49:17 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/3/2025 1:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Pilialoha Callahan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I Pilialoha Callahan support this bill! Please support SB1250. Increasing the ability of food banks to purchase locally grown food is a win-win for our communities and farmers. One major challenge local farmers face is access to markets. This can help grow our local food and agriculture economy while providing our communities with nutritious food during times of crisis.

Preparing Hawai'i's families in the wake of disaster, food banks rely almost exclusively on private donations and grants, even though local governments rely heavily on them during times of crisis. The Farm to Families program would provide funding for purchasing from local farmers, improving emergency food access for families and opening up a local market for farmers during times of economic crisis.

mahalo for your support.

SB-1250

Submitted on: 2/1/2025 8:39:05 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/3/2025 1:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Doneileen Willets	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support SB1250. Increasing the ability of food banks to purchase locally grown food is a win-win for our communities and farmers. One major challenge local farmers face is access to markets. This will help grow our local food and agriculture economy while providing our communities with nutritious food during times of crisis.

Kindest regards.

D. Willets

SB-1250

Submitted on: 2/1/2025 6:50:19 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/3/2025 1:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Emelia Briscoe	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support SB1250. Increasing the ability of food banks to purchase locally grown food is a win-win for our communities and farmers. One major challenge local farmers face is access to markets. This will help grow our local food and agriculture economy while providing our communities with nutritious food during times of crisis.

Preparing Hawai'i's families in the wake of disaster, food banks rely almost exclusively on private donations and grants, even though local governments rely heavily on them during times of crisis. The Farm to Families program would provide funding for purchasing from local farmers, improving emergency food access for families and opening up a local market for farmers during times of economic crisis.

SB-1250

Submitted on: 2/1/2025 6:28:50 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/3/2025 1:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kathy Shimata	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support SB1250. Increasing the ability of food banks to purchase locally grown food is a win-win for our communities and farmers. One major challenge local farmers face is access to markets. This will help grow our local food and agriculture economy while providing our communities with nutritious food during times of crisis.

We talk, talk, talk about how dependent we are on imported food. Here is a chance to do something meaningful about it.

Please support SB1250. Mahalo.

Kathy Shimata

Honolulu. 96822

SB-1250

Submitted on: 2/2/2025 10:00:19 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/3/2025 1:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kristen Young	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support SB1250. Increasing the ability of food banks to purchase locally grown food is a win-win for our communities and farmers. One major challenge local farmers face is access to markets. This will help grow our local food and agriculture economy while providing our communities with nutritious food during times of crisis.

Preparing Hawai'i's families in the wake of disaster, food banks rely almost exclusively on private donations and grants, even though local governments rely heavily on them during times of crisis. The Farm to Families program would provide funding for purchasing from local farmers, improving emergency food access for families and opening up a local market for farmers during times of economic crisis.

SB-1250

Submitted on: 2/2/2025 9:07:06 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/3/2025 1:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kodie Solis-Kalani	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha. I support SB1250 because one of the main challenges for local farmers is finding a reliable access to market. Farm to Families will increase access to local nutritious foods while supporting our local farmers - aiding in growing our local economy. Food grown here should be fed to those that are from and/or live here first, before serving other markets and communities. Mahalo.

SB-1250

Submitted on: 2/2/2025 9:06:28 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/3/2025 1:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Christy Shaver	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I urge you to support SB1250. Strengthening food banks' ability to purchase locally grown food is a win-win for both our communities and our farmers. One of the biggest challenges local farmers face is access to stable markets. By investing in local food systems, this bill will not only support Hawai'i's agricultural economy but also ensure families have access to fresh, nutritious food—especially during times of crisis.

Food banks are a lifeline in disaster recovery, yet they rely almost entirely on private donations and grants, even as local governments depend on them to feed communities in emergencies. The Farm to Families program would provide essential funding to source food directly from local farmers, strengthening both food security and economic resilience. This initiative ensures that when families are in need, we are not only providing them with healthy food but also supporting the farmers who sustain our islands.

Mahalo for your time and consideration. Please pass SB1250 to help build a stronger, more resilient Hawai'i.

SB-1250

Submitted on: 2/2/2025 8:19:10 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/3/2025 1:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Paul Bernstein	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Gabbard and members of the AEN committee:

I'm writing in support of SB1250 because it makes our state less vulnerable. First, it helps our local families to be more food secure, which is vital to a functioning society. Second, it makes the entire state more food secure by reducing our dependence on imported food.

Please pass SB1250 out of your committee.

Mahalo,

Paul Bernstein

SB-1250

Submitted on: 2/2/2025 5:57:28 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/3/2025 1:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jennifer Chiwa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Senator Gabbard, Vice Chair Senator Richards III and Members of the Committee on Agriculture and the Environment.

Please support SB 1250 to establish the Hawaii Farm to Families Program.

Mahalo.

Jennifer Chiwa

Makiki and life long resident of Oahu

SB-1250

Submitted on: 2/2/2025 7:15:51 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/3/2025 1:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
JarraeTehani Manasas	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha

Please support SB1250 which increases the ability of food banks to purchase locally grown food is a win-win for our communities and farmers. One major challenge local farmers face is access to markets. This will help grow our local food and agriculture economy while providing our communities with nutritious food during times of crisis.

Preparing Hawai‘is families in the wake of disaster, food banks rely almost exclusively on private donations and grants even though local governments rely heavily on them during times of crisis. The Farm to Families program would provide funding for purchasing from local farmers improving emergency food access for families and opening up a local market for farmers during times of economic crisis.

Mahalo for your consideration.

JarraeTehan Manasas, Kailua Kona Hawai‘i

SB-1250

Submitted on: 2/2/2025 1:09:26 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/3/2025 1:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
kimdonghyeon	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support SB1250. Increasing the ability of food banks to purchase locally grown food is a win-win for our communities and farmers. One major challenge local farmers face is access to markets. This will help grow our local food and agriculture economy while providing our communities with nutritious food during times of crisis.

Preparing Hawai'i's families in the wake of disaster, food banks rely almost exclusively on private donations and grants, even though local governments rely heavily on them during times of crisis. The Farm to Families program would provide funding for purchasing from local farmers, improving emergency food access for families and opening up a local market for farmers during times of economic crisis.

SB-1250

Submitted on: 2/2/2025 4:28:20 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/3/2025 1:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Irena Bliss	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha kākou,

Please support SB1250. Increasing the ability of food banks to purchase locally grown food is a win-win for our communities and farmers. One major challenge local farmers face is access to markets. This will help grow our local food and agriculture economy while providing our communities with nutritious food during times of crisis.

Preparing Hawai‘i’s families in the wake of disaster, food banks rely almost exclusively on private donations and grants, even though local governments rely heavily on them during times of crisis. The Farm to Families program would provide funding for purchasing from local farmers, improving emergency food access for families and opening up a local market for farmers during times of economic crisis.

Please support SB1250. It is vital to continue to live the values of Aloha ‘Āina, Mālama ‘Āina and make decisions that support the well-being of present and future generations on island.

Mahalo nui for your consideration and support.

Irena Bliss
Ha‘ikū, Maui 96708

SB-1250

Submitted on: 2/2/2025 12:10:09 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/3/2025 1:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Stacy M Sproat	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support Hawai`i's farmers and communities by supporting this bill. Mahalo!!

SB-1250

Submitted on: 2/1/2025 10:56:38 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/3/2025 1:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
emily gambino	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support SB1250. Increasing the ability of food banks to purchase locally grown food is a win-win for our communities and farmers. One major challenge local farmers face is access to markets. This will help grow our local food and agriculture economy while providing our communities with nutritious food during times of crisis.

Preparing Hawai'i's families in the wake of disaster, food banks rely almost exclusively on private donations and grants, even though local governments rely heavily on them during times of crisis. The Farm to Families program would provide funding for purchasing from local farmers, improving emergency food access for families and opening up a local market for farmers during times of economic crisis.

Thank you for your consideration,

Emily Gambino, Makawao

SB-1250

Submitted on: 2/1/2025 10:10:41 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/3/2025 1:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Susan Stayton	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Senators,.

I am writing to ask you to please support SB1250. Increasing the ability of food banks to purchase locally grown food is a win-win for our communities and farmers. One major challenge local farmers face is access to markets. This will help grow our local food and agriculture economy while providing our communities with nutritious food during times of crisis.

Preparing Hawai'i's families in the wake of disaster, food banks rely almost exclusively on private donations and grants, even though local governments rely heavily on them during times of crisis. The Farm to Families program would provide funding for purchasing from local farmers, improving emergency food access for families and opening up a local market for farmers during times of economic crisis.

More food self-sufficiency is an important goal for Hawaii.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Susan Stayton, Lawai, Kauai

SB-1250

Submitted on: 2/2/2025 10:21:19 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/3/2025 1:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Melissa Barker	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Honorable Committee Members,

I am writing to respectfully as that you support SB1250.

Increasing the ability of food banks to purchase locally grown food is a win-win for our communities and farmers. One major challenge local farmers face is access to markets. This will help grow our local food and agriculture economy while providing our communities with nutritious food during times of crisis.

Preparing Hawai'i's families in the wake of disaster, food banks rely almost exclusively on private donations and grants, even though local governments rely heavily on them during times of crisis. The Farm to Families program would provide funding for purchasing from local farmers, improving emergency food access for families and opening up a local market for farmers during times of economic crisis.

Thank you for your attention and consideration.

Melissa Barker

Kapaa, HI



Restore the Commons

Monday, February 3, 2025, 1:02 pm

Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment.

SENATE BILL 1250 – RELATING TO FARM TO FAMILIES

Position: Whole-hearted and Relieved Support

Me ke Aloha, Chair Gabbard, Vice-Chair Richards, and Members of the Committee on Agriculture and Environment

SB1250 establishes the Hawai'i Farm to Families Program to alleviate food shortages in the State, and appropriates funds.

Little needs to be said about the critical nature this bill addresses. With climate change continuing to spiral out of control, a small taste of portents producing such horrific results in Lāhainā, and the painful experience of the COVID shutdown revealing our proximity to Statewide starvation in the face of another disaster, Hawaii needs to mobilize critical resources and decision-makers to radically transform our food security.

Consecutive Food Summits have gathered hundreds of practitioners, innovators, community groups, and individuals around this urgent necessity, ready to build an alternative food production and distribution system. It's all hands on deck.

Mahalo for the opportunity to address this issue,

/s/ Charley Ice, Hoā'āina, Waimalu, O'ahu;

retired Hydrologist, Commission on Water Resource Management (25 years) and Planner at DHHL (10 years);

former Chair of O'ahu Democratic Party Region 5 ('Aiea-Pearl City);

SB-1250

Submitted on: 2/2/2025 12:55:45 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/3/2025 1:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Chloe Tonda	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Senators,

As a 16-year-old youth of Hawaii, I think it is imperative that we implement this program in order to reduce the food insecurity of this state. I am in **strong support** of this bill.

It is only common sense to help support families in need and to support our local farms. If we put more reliance on local farms, not only does it help our local economy, it directly helps local farmers. Especially with the recent avian flu outbreak on the mainland, we need to make sure we have enough produce to provide to families and to cut costs. Moreover, it is the government's job to care about every single household and to make sure the people's livelihood and the state's economy don't deteriorate.

I'm keeping it short and sweet. I hope that you pass this bill for the better interest of our state.

Sincerely,

Chloe T.

SB-1250

Submitted on: 2/2/2025 1:21:31 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/3/2025 1:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marcia Kemble	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Greetings Chair and Committee members,

Please support SB1250. Increasing the ability of food banks to purchase locally grown food is a win-win for our communities and farmers. One major challenge local farmers face is access to markets. This will help grow our local food and agriculture economy while providing our communities with nutritious food during times of crisis.

Preparing Hawai'i's families in the wake of disaster, food banks rely almost exclusively on private donations and grants, even though local governments rely heavily on them during times of crisis. The Farm to Families program would provide funding for purchasing from local farmers, improving emergency food access for families and opening up a local market for farmers during times of economic crisis.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Marcia Kemble

Makiki

SB-1250

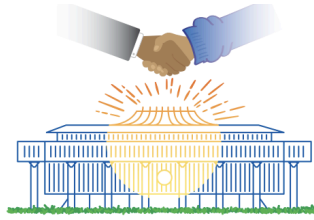
Submitted on: 2/2/2025 12:54:12 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/3/2025 1:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jessica Kuzmier	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, I am writing to say that I am absolutely in support of this bill, SB 1250. Our state has so many people who are food insecure, and to me this is a tragedy and unacceptable. I really believe making it more lucrative for our local farmers to subsidize the food that people receive in food banks is awesome so people can have access to fresh, local food regardless of income level. Additionally, I feel this will be a boon to our local producers, which in turn will help us as a state create more food security for ourselves so we are not overly reliant on outside sources for agricultural products. With the astronomical rise of bird flu causing mass culling of livestock, especially on the mainland, the effects of climate change dampening the viability of obtaining produce outside of Hawai'i and the attendant costs associated with this, I believe supporting our farmers and ranchers here in any way possible is terrific and to have them be able to feed all of our people here is absolutely imperative, logical and humane. Mahalo for your time on this important issue.



CLIMATE FUTURE FORUM

Date: Feb 2, 2025

To: Senator Gabbard, Chair
Senator Richards, Vice Chair
Members of the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment, AEN

From: Climate Future Forum

Re: **SUPPORT for SB1250**

Hearing: 3 February 2025, Monday, 1:02PM

On behalf of the Climate Future Forum, thank you for the opportunity to testify in **support of SB1250**, which will establish the Hawai'i Farm to Families Program to alleviate food shortages in the State.

My name is Maya Gaudio and I am a 16 year old student at Punahou School. Chair Gabbard and Vice Chair Richards, thank you both for the opportunity that I had to represent Hawaii's youth voices on Climate Change at the AEN Climate Briefing session earlier in January. As climate change continues to press our state as an urgent issue, creating a resilient and regenerative food system remains a large part of the solution. As a member of both Climate Future Forum and Hawaii Youth Food Council, I am in strong support of this bill which will work towards creating a program that will help to reduce the immense food shortages that our state goes through and that severely affects our state's keiki.

Creating this program will allow for families and the state's food system to turn its reliance from mainland imports to our local farmers, investing in our local economy. This will create a more resilient food system, similar to that of pre-western contact.

For the keiki and youth of Hawaii, nearly one third are growing up in a food-insecure home, negatively impacting their long term health, learning abilities, and cognitive function. Along with Hawaii's keiki, native Hawaiians and pacific islanders have been disproportionately impacted by food insecurity, with nearly 40% of households experiencing hunger. It is the responsibility of the government to care for our island communities and keiki, supporting all by increasing access to fresh, locally grown produce.

The Climate Future Forum empowers youth (ages 14-26) to actively engage in shaping and advocating for climate policy and legislation. By bringing together youth, educators, policymakers, and nonprofits, the forum fosters meaningful dialogue on climate action priorities and provides

actionable steps to address climate change in Hawai'i. Through discussions involving over 100 youth, the forum has identified key high-priority areas, including regenerative food systems, climate and the economy, clean energy and transportation, climate justice and equity, and sustainable infrastructure.

Thank you very much for your support of youth engagement in climate policy. **We respectfully request that you pass this bill.**

Sincerely,
Maya Gaudiano

Youth Leader of Hawai'i Climate Future Forum
Fellow of Punahou Sustainability Fellowship
Member of Hawaii Youth Food Council

February 2, 2025

To: The Honorable Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair
The Honorable Herbert M. "Tim" Richards, III, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment

From: Chelsea Takahashi

Subject: Testimony in Strong Support of SB1250, Relating to Farm to Families

Aloha Chair Gabbard and Vice Chair Richards,


I am writing in strong support of **SB1250**. I have worked for The Food Basket, Hawai'i Island's food bank, for the last 9 years and can attest to the deep commitment of the organization to ending hunger through a holistic approach that strengthens our local food system.

When I returned home in 2016 after completing my education on the mainland, I found few job opportunities within my career interest of food system development. The Food Basket was one of the few organizations leading this critical work and had available job openings. My time at The Food Basket has since been filled with meaningful service to the Hawai'i Island community, including piloting and scaling the statewide *DA BUX Double Up Food Bucks* program in partnership with the Hawai'i Good Food Alliance, and most recently, establishing the *Mālama Da Farmer Grant* program in partnership with the County of Hawai'i.

State funding received through this legislation will further amplify the local food system work that The Food Basket has been leading for over a decade. Specifically, State funding will be used to purchase local food directly from Hawai'i Island food producers, including farmers, ranchers, and value-added producers. The Food Basket is also committed to purchasing these food products at market value to ensure our farmers can support economically viable businesses, grow the island's local food production, and create greater food access for our low-income community members who are most vulnerable to food insecurity.

Thank you very much for your consideration of my testimony. I urge you to support SB1250 to invest in Hawai'i's food system and the communities it sustains.

Mahalo,


Chelsea Takahashi

SB-1250

Submitted on: 2/2/2025 11:51:32 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/3/2025 1:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Debra M Javar	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I fully SUPPORT sb1250. This would be a win-win situation for all involved. It helps local families to get fresh local produce and help support our local farmers business. This helps our state to be more self-sufficient. We don't need to rely on food being shipped in, which is more expensive.

Mahalo

Debra M Javar

Kona, HI

SB-1250

Submitted on: 2/2/2025 11:56:01 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/3/2025 1:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
McKenzie Wildey	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Our island's food security is more critical now than every. I support this measure.

SB-1250

Submitted on: 2/2/2025 5:50:22 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/3/2025 1:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Keoni DeFranco	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support SB1250.

Empowering food banks to procure more locally grown produce offers significant benefits for both our communities and our local farmers. Farmers often struggle with limited market access, and this initiative will invigorate our local food and agriculture sector while ensuring that families have access to healthy, nutritious food during emergencies.

In times of disaster, Hawai‘i’s families rely on food banks—which are primarily sustained through private donations and grants—even as local governments lean on them for support. The Farm to Families program seeks to allocate funding specifically for purchasing produce from local farmers, thereby boosting emergency food supplies for families and providing a much-needed market for farmers during economic challenges.

SB-1250

Submitted on: 2/2/2025 1:56:30 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/3/2025 1:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Robert H. Pahia	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Strongly support SB 1250 . Increase in marketing capacity for farmers is obvious

SB-1250

Submitted on: 2/2/2025 2:32:03 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/3/2025 1:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Caroline Azelski	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Strong support. Teaches values leading to health and economic benefits that can compound over decades. Thank you.

SB-1250

Submitted on: 2/2/2025 2:34:47 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/3/2025 1:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Susan Wong	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support SB1250. Increasing the ability of food banks to purchase locally grown food is a win-win for our communities and farmers. One major challenge local farmers face is access to markets. This will help grow our local food and agriculture economy while providing our communities with nutritious food during times of crisis.

Preparing Hawai'i's families in the wake of disaster, food banks rely almost exclusively on private donations and grants, even though local governments rely heavily on them during times of crisis. The Farm to Families program would provide funding for purchasing from local farmers, improving emergency food access for families and opening up a local market for farmers during times of economic crisis.

Susan Wong, Kailua, HI

SB-1250

Submitted on: 2/2/2025 2:47:19 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/3/2025 1:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ann Dorsey	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I urge you to support SB1250, which, through the Farm to Families program, would provide critical funding for food banks so they can purchase food from local farmers. Doing so will give local farmers access to markets, which they struggle with now. It will also boost our local food and agriculture economy and resilience by meeting the essential need for food during times of crisis.

Thank you

SB-1250

Submitted on: 2/2/2025 3:57:31 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/3/2025 1:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sven Sorge	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Sirs and Madams,

Please support SB1250. Increasing the ability of food banks to purchase locally grown food is a win-win for our communities and farmers. One major challenge local farmers face is access to markets. This will help grow our local food and agriculture economy while providing our communities with nutritious food during times of crisis.

Preparing Hawai'i's families in the wake of disaster, food banks rely almost exclusively on private donations and grants, even though local governments rely heavily on them during times of crisis. The Farm to Families program would provide funding for purchasing from local farmers, improving emergency food access for families and opening up a local market for farmers during times of economic crisis.

Thank you very much!

SB-1250

Submitted on: 2/2/2025 8:29:44 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/3/2025 1:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Noreen Dougherty	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support SB1250. We must focus on supporting our local farms and our local residents that are working toward our goal of being self sustainable. We need to expand the markets available to our local farmers.

Noreen
Dougherty
Hawaii

Kapaa,

SB-1250

Submitted on: 2/2/2025 10:13:43 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/3/2025 1:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
LaVache Scanlan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha kakou,

My name is LaVache Scanlan and I am a faculty and chairperson of our Basic Needs Committee at Kapi‘olani Community College. I am also our campus representative on the UH System Basic Needs Committee. Some colleagues and I started the Pohukaina Food Pantry on our campus, which serves KCC and UH students, as well as our community. In 2024, over a 7 month period of operation we served 1,109 households and 625 children. Our students at Kapi‘olani are parents and also take care of younger siblings. Access to food is important, not only for students to be able to learn and complete degrees, but vital to sustain their families that depend on them to make ends meet. Our food pantry is supported by the Hawai‘i Foodbank and individual UH Foundation donors. We also receive food from the non-profit Aloha Harvest. This bill would provide access to healthier food that will not only sustain those that are food insecure, but support local farmers and businesses. It is a win-win situation.

Please support of the "Farm to Families" bill, a pivotal piece of legislation that has the potential to transform our state’s food security landscape. This bill will allow food distributing organizations to strengthen their partnerships with local farmers and food producers, ensuring that fresh, locally grown produce reaches families facing food insecurity.

The partnership between local farms and food organizations benefits families in our communities and our economy by:

1. **Strengthening Hawai‘i’s Food Supply Chain:** By investing in local agriculture, we reduce our dependence on imported goods, creating a more resilient and sustainable food system for Hawai‘i.
2. **Supporting Local Farmers:** The bill offers a direct benefit to Hawai‘i’s agricultural sector, providing a steady and fair market for local produce. Farmers can plan for future growth knowing their products will feed their neighbors in need.
3. **Enhancing Nutritional Access:** Fresh, local produce provides essential nutrients to individuals and families who may otherwise lack access to healthy food options. This not only fights hunger but also promotes long-term health and wellness in our communities.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to our shared vision of a thriving, food-secure Hawai‘i. I am deeply grateful for your consideration of this important legislation.

SB-1250

Submitted on: 2/2/2025 11:35:49 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/3/2025 1:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Danielle Lee	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support this bill. We need to be investing more and smarter into building up Hawai'i's food system to be more sustainable, equitable, and resilient. It's imperative for our island community to have strong food systems in place especially in times of natural disasters and the current crisis of food insecurity. We need to be supporting our farmers, agricultural economy, and all these organizations and nonprofits doing the food assistance ground work everyday. More nutritious, local food will only help to strengthen the community.

SB-1250

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 2:26:35 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/3/2025 1:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Joell Edwards	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha - my name is Joell Edwards - Wainiha resident and a strong supporter of Hawaii Food Bank who supported our small community during the 2018 floods, throughout COVID and continuing care for our ALICE and fragile community members .

Please support SB1250. Increasing the ability of food banks to purchase locally grown food is a win-win for our communities and farmers. One major challenge local farmers face is access to markets. This will help grow our local food and agriculture economy while providing our communities with nutritious food during times of crisis.

Preparing Hawai'i's families in the wake of disaster, food banks rely almost exclusively on private donations and grants, even though local governments rely heavily on them during times of crisis. The Farm to Families program would provide funding for purchasing from local farmers, improving emergency food access for families and opening up a local market for farmers during times of economic crisis.