

DAVID Y. IGE
Governor

JOSH GREEN
Lt. Governor



PHYLLIS SHIMABUKURO-GEISER
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

State of Hawaii
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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**TESTIMONY OF PHYLLIS SHIMABUKURO-GEISER
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE**

BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & ENVIRONMENT

**MARCH 13, 2019
1:15 P.M.
CONFERENCE ROOM 224**

**HOUSE BILL NO. 463 HD1
RELATING TO FOOD SAFETY**

Chairperson Gabbard and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 463 HD1 which proposes to require the department to partner with the agricultural community to establish a food safety certification training program to assist small and medium sized farms to be certified by the USDA Good Agricultural Practices certification program. The Department supports the intent of this measure provided it does not impact the Department's priorities listed in the Executive Budget.

The Department currently works in partnership with the University of Hawaii College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (UH-CTAHR), who performs coaching and training with farmers to comply with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's Produce Safety Rule and the USDA Good Agricultural Practices requirements. Under a cooperative agreement with the United States Department of Agriculture, the Department conducts U.S. Department of Agriculture's Good Agricultural Practices audits at the request of farm businesses and restricts auditors from performing outreach and coaching activity.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.





UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment
Wednesday, March 13, 2019 at 1:15 p.m.

By
Nicholas Comerford
Dean, College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources
And
Michael Bruno
Interim Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs
Vice Chancellor for Research
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

HB 463 HD1 – RELATING TO FOOD SAFETY

Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Ruderman and members of the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment:

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in strong support of HB 463 HD1. Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) Certification is important, in fact crucial, for assuring both food safety and farm success. Compliance with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) regulations is also necessary for marketing success. The Harmonized GAP program and Group GAP programs attempt to bring both food safety programs into a consistent approach and provide small farmers with ways to reduce the cost of compliance. The University of Hawai'i at Mānoa (UHM), College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (CTAHR) strongly supports increasing the GAP training in the state. By providing safe and high-quality food to the public, Hawai'i agriculture will increase public confidence in Hawai'i products and serve as a model to other associated and supporting businesses resulting in a consistent contribution to the economy in Hawai'i. This bill is consistent with CTAHR Extension training in food safety and provides additional help in areas that CTAHR Extension does not function. For example, CTAHR does not do farm audits, yet there are Group GAP programs currently operating in Hawai'i that do internal audits for all farms in a group. When the U.S. Department of Agriculture inspectors comes in, they audit only a fraction of these farms and, if given a positive audit, all farms are certified for GAP. With GAP being harmonized with FSMA it is obvious how this can be a saving to the individual farmer. This type of program also is an incentive for small farmers to join and have their crop aggregated with others.

In previous testimony, we gave all the resources that CTAHR has available to help the farmer in being prepared for a GAP audit. However, CTAHR does not do audits of individual farms; nor does it have the capacity to do so.

CTAHR is involved only in education and technical support, which is only part of the certification process.

This bill addresses that need and additional needs that move the farmer toward certification. UHM/CTAHR is ready to collaborate with the Hawai'i Department of Agriculture (HDOA) and other agencies to support the education process related to GAP Certification. We support the funding going to HDOA, but defer to their testimony.

Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony in strong support of HB 463 HD1.



Email: communications@ulupono.com

SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & ENVIRONMENT
Wednesday, March 13, 2019 — 1:15 p.m. — Room 224

Ulupono Initiative Supports HB 463 HD 1, Relating to Food Safety

Dear Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Ruderman, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Murray Clay and I am Managing Partner of Ulupono Initiative, a Hawai'i-based impact investment firm that strives to improve the quality of life for the people of Hawai'i by working toward solutions that create more locally produced food; increase affordable, clean, renewable energy; and better manage waste and fresh water resources. Ulupono believes that self-sufficiency is essential to our future prosperity and will help shape a future where economic progress and mission-focused impact can work hand in hand.

Ulupono supports HB 463 HD 1, which provides funding for the Department of Agriculture to partner with the agricultural community to establish a food safety certification program for obtaining Good Agricultural Practices certification, because it aligns with our goal to increase local food production.

One of the greatest challenges facing agricultural enterprises over the next few years is getting into compliance with new federal food safety regulations. These new rules are expected to protect public health by providing more information about food production. However, the new regulations are expected to be significantly more strict, which requires more time and cost for compliance. It is a challenge for our farmers and ranchers to navigate the nuances of the law, track new data requirements, and implement best practices for food safety. Without support, farmers and ranchers, particularly smaller scale operations, may be in violation of the law or be forced to shut down, which will jeopardize the future of local agriculture in Hawai'i.

As Hawai'i's local food issues become increasingly complex and challenging, organizations need additional resources and support to address and overcome them. We appreciate this committee's efforts to look at policies that support local food production.

We believe that through collaboration, we can help produce more local food and support an economically robust homegrown agriculture industry, which strengthens our community with fresh, healthy food. Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Respectfully,

Murray Clay
Managing Partner

Investing in a Sustainable Hawai'i



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Derek Kurisu, KTA Superstores, *Advisor*

TO:

Committee on Agriculture and the Environment
Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair
Senator Russell E. Ruderman, Vice Chair

FROM: HAWAII FOOD INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION
Lauren Zirbel, Executive Director

DATE: March 13, 2019
TIME: 1:15pm
PLACE: Conference Room 224

RE: HB463 HD1 Relating to Food Safety

Position: Support

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

Local agriculture is important to HFIA. Small farms in Hawaii face many challenges, including the financial and administrative burden of meeting state and federal regulations. Providing Hawaii farms with the support they need to comply with the U.S. Department of Agriculture Good Agricultural Practices Certification will help to get more local Hawaii produce into the hands of Hawaii consumers. Many of our member retailers require the farms they buy from to have USDA GAP Certification because it confirms that a farm is committed to the highest standard of produce safety and freshness. GAP Certification is also an important first step towards full compliance with the Food Service Modernization Act (FSMA). This bill will help make Hawaii farms and Hawaii agriculture more viable, and help to decrease our reliance on imported food. We encourage you to vote yes on this measure. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



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Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Agriculture & the Environment

Sen. Mike Gabbard, Chair, Sen. Russell E. Ruderman, Vice Chair
Wednesday March 13, 2019, 1:15p, Conference Room 224

HB463-Relating to Food Safety

Chair Gabbard, Vice-chair Ruderman, and members of the committee:

My name is Kevin Kelly and I am the President of North Shore EVP, a regional economic development organization located on the North Shore of Oahu. Our organization strongly supports the establishment a food safety certification training program that will provide direct assistance to small and medium sized farms in obtaining their USDA GAP certification.

GAP certification is, in practice, a requirement for small farms that want to comply with the Food Safety & Modernization Act (FSMA) and scale their operations to meet the increasing demand for locally grown fresh produce. When FSMA comes into effect for all farms in January 2020, GAP certification will serve as tangible evidence to produce buyers that a producer is in compliance (or very close to being in compliance) with federal law.

Our work is paying off. Next week the third farm in our GroupGAP program will be audited and if all goes as expected, Hawaii will have yet another small, GAP certified farm with ability to respond to Hawaii consumer demand for fresh, locally grown produce.

SB519, the companion bill to this measure, was amended by your committee to direct funding to the University of Hawaii College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (CTAHR). After discussions, North Shore EVP and CTAHR both support funding for this community-based certification training program to remain in the Department of Agriculture.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.

Sincerely,

Kevin M. Kelly, President



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March 13, 2019

HEARING BEFORE THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

TESTIMONY ON HB 463, HD1
RELATING TO FOOD SAFETY

Room 224
1:15 PM

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

I am Brian Miyamoto, Executive Director of the Hawaii Farm Bureau (HFB). Organized since 1948, the HFB is comprised of 1,900 farm family members statewide and serves as Hawaii's voice of agriculture to protect, advocate and advance the social, economic and educational interests of our diverse agricultural community.

HFB supports HB 463, HD1, which requires and appropriates funds to the Department of Agriculture to partner with the Hawaii agriculture community to establish a food safety certification training program to assist small to medium-sized farms to comply with the United States Department of Agriculture Good Agricultural Practices Certification Program.

HFB appreciates the support by the legislature in our past efforts to help Hawaii's farmers achieve compliance with the FDA Food Safety and Modernization Act. As the actual rule has been rolled out by FDA the immensity of the task is becoming evident.

Foodborne illnesses can be serious, and we should seek ways to reduce risk. This bill will provide that assistance to our farmers for the costs they will incur to become food safety compliant.

The many criteria associated with FSMA to be compliant should not be an impediment for safe food. Hawaii cannot afford to further lose farmers as we strive to increase local food production. We want to incentivize our farmers' ability to continue their operations and provide Hawaii with abundant safe food.

Hawaii Farm Bureau appreciates any effort which will assist farmers with expenses to become compliant with the Food Safety Modernization Act.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important subject.