A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO FOOD DONATION.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

SECTION 1. The legislature finds that more than ten percent of Hawaii residents, including tens of thousands of children and seniors, are food insecure and receive food assistance through nonprofit organizations and government programs. Despite high levels of food insecurity, Hawaii businesses and residents discard more than 237,000 tons of food waste per year.

The legislature further finds that approximately twenty-six percent of food grown in or imported to Hawaii is thrown away, amounting to approximately $1,000,000,000 in annual food waste. Worldwide, an estimated one-third of the food raised or prepared goes to waste, despite more than eight hundred million people worldwide experiencing hunger.

The legislature recognizes that food production is a direct contributor to local and global climate change. Food production requires energy, fertilizer, irrigation, livestock feed, and other resources that contribute to greenhouse gas emissions and
add pollutants to the environment. Food waste entering
landfills creates methane gas, a greenhouse gas that is eighty-
four times more potent than carbon dioxide. Worldwide, wasted
food accounts for approximately eight per cent of all human-
based greenhouse gas emissions.

The Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Act was passed by the
United States Congress in 1996 to protect good-faith food donors
from civil and criminal liability and to encourage the donation
of food that would otherwise go to waste. Despite these
protections, much of the wholesome surplus food in Hawaii and in
other states is discarded instead of donated. A California
survey found that forty-four per cent of manufacturers, forty-
one per cent of restaurants, and twenty-five per cent of
retailers identified fear of liability as their primary barrier
to donating surplus food.

The purpose of this Act is to discourage food waste and
encourage food donation to needy recipients by:
(1) Clarifying and expanding liability protections for
good-faith food donors;
(2) Allowing the donation of expired food when the donor makes a good-faith judgment that the food is unspoiled; and
(3) Requiring that education about food donation liability protections be made a part of the health inspection process so that food establishments are aware of these provisions.

SECTION 2. Chapter 321, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended by adding a new section to part I to be appropriately designated and to read as follows:

"§321- Promotion of food donation. The inspection of food establishments pursuant to this chapter shall include education of the establishments' owners, managers, or appropriate agents on the existence and operation of chapter 145D. The department shall publish and distribute to food establishments materials that explain the exceptions to liability in section 145D-2."

SECTION 3. Section 145D-2, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended to read as follows:

"[§]§145D-2[+] Exceptions to liability. (a) Any donor of food products, who in good faith donates the food [fer]:
(1) Directly; or

(2) For the use or distribution by a charitable, religious, or nonprofit organization, or government entity;

to needy persons shall not be liable for any civil damages or criminal penalties for any injuries or illnesses including, but not limited to, injuries or illnesses resulting from the nature, age, condition, packaging, or handling of the donated food products, except [such damages] as may result from the donor's gross negligence or wanton acts or omissions.

(b) A charitable, religious, or nonprofit organization [which in good faith], or government entity that receives food[–] pursuant to subsection (a) that is apparently fit for human consumption[–] and distributes it in good faith to needy persons at no charge, shall not be liable for any civil damages or criminal penalties resulting from the condition of the food unless an injury or illness results from its gross negligence, or wanton acts or omissions.

(c) This section shall not relieve any organization or government entity from any other duty imposed [upon them] by law.
for the inspection of donated food products or for any
provisions regarding the handling of [such] those products.
(d) The exceptions to liability specified in subsection
(a) shall include:
(1) The donation of perishable or nonperishable food that
has exceeded the labeled shelf life date recommended
by the manufacturer; and
(2) The donation of farm produce, including where the
needy person is directly involved in the harvest of
the donated food;
provided that the good-faith donor or distributor reasonably
believes that the food is fit for human consumption.
As used in this section, "farm produce" means all
agricultural, horticultural, and vegetable produce of the soil,
poultry, poultry products, livestock, and livestock products,
but shall not include timber or timber products."

SECTION 4. Section 663-10.6, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
amended by amending subsections (a) and (b) to read as follows:
"(a) Any charitable or nonprofit organization that in good
faith provides shelter or proper means of subsistence to needy
persons as part of its bona fide and customary charitable
activities, rendered without remuneration or expectation of remuneration, shall be exempt from civil liability for injuries and damages resulting from the organization's acts or omissions in providing [such] the shelter or subsistence, except for gross negligence or wanton acts or omissions of the organization.

(b) Any [person] donor who donates goods, [food,] materials, or services [to]:

(1) Directly to a needy person; or

(2) To a charitable or nonprofit organization described in subsection (a), shall be exempt from civil liability for injuries and damages resulting from the donation, except for gross negligence or wanton acts or omissions."

SECTION 5. This Act does not affect rights and duties that matured, penalties that were incurred, and proceedings that were begun before its effective date.

SECTION 6. Statutory material to be repealed is bracketed and stricken. New statutory material is underscored.

SECTION 7. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.
Report Title: 
Food Donation; Charitable Donations; Liability Protection

Description:
Expands liability protection for donors to include donations of food and similar donations made directly to needy persons. Authorizes the donation of expired food when the donor believes in good faith that the food remains fit for human consumption.

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