



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Finance
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SB 2928 SD2 – RELATING TO THE HAWAII FARM TO SCHOOL PROGRAM

Chair Luke, Vice Chair Cullen, and members of the House Committee on Finance:

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of SB 2928 SD2 with comments.

Section 1. We continue to concur with the listed reasons in SB 2928 SD2 that describe how farm to school programs are beneficial to the education and health of students. A further advantage of farm to school programs is the assurance of a specific and sustained market for locally grown products that the school system represents. We also continue to concur that food safety issues are important criteria that are necessary for products grown for farm to school programs, and that farmers likely require assistance to understand and comply with these standards and receive good agricultural practices (GAP) certifications. We continue to support the introduction of a farm to school grant pilot program.

Section 2. We continue to support the details in this section and suggest that the Hawaii Cooperative Extension Service be included in 2a as an entity that can apply for grants as this organization is a major source of training for GAP certifications and food safety for producers.

We also continue to suggest that an important criterion for awarding grants be that the agricultural operation from which food is purchased be shown to be of a scale of operation to be a commercially viable operation that is able to provide safe, sustained delivery of products. Including this provision will assure that the limited grant funds are not going to operations that are too small to support the food safety costs and that will not be a longer-term player in this program.

Sections 3-6. We continue to support the program as identified in these sections.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support with comments on SB 2928 SD2.