Resolution 24-243
Testimony

MISC. COM. 548
P&E

HAWAI'I FOOD BANK

FEEDING AMERICA

November 21, 2024

HONOLULU CITY COUNCIL
HEARING BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON PLANNING AND THE ECONOMY

RE: TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF RESOLUTION 24-243 PROPOSED CD1

Dear Chair Kia'aina, Vice Chair Cordero, and Committee Members,

On behalf of Hawai'i Foodbank, I am writing in **strong support of Resolution 24-243 proposed CD1,** which establishes staggered term limits for all appointed members and updates the priority focus topics of the Agricultural Development Task Force.

For over 40 years, Hawai'i Foodbank has provided daily and emergency assistance to those facing food insecurity in Hawai'i. As the state's leading hunger-relief organization, Hawai'i Foodbank distributes food to families and individuals on O'ahu and in Kaua'i County through direct service programs and through our network of 266 agency partners and pantries. Last year, we served an average of over 150,000 people each month, distributing a total of 21 million pounds of nutritious food, including 5.9 million pounds of fresh produce.

Since 2020, with support from the City and County of Honolulu's Office of Economic Revitalization, we have worked with the Hawai'i Farm Bureau and more than 40 local farmers and food hubs to help create a consistent market for food producers, strengthening our community food systems and creating a healthier, more resilient Hawai'i. We have invested over $11 million in local food purchases, distributing more than 9 million pounds of locally sourced fruits, vegetables, and proteins from FY2020 through 2024. Last year, of the $1.3M we spent on produce, 88% directly supported local agriculture.

With nearly one-third of Hawai'i households currently experiencing food insecurity, the long-term societal impact is likely to be extreme, from lower academic achievement for keiki to increased health care costs and reduced economic productivity for adults. To address these critical issues, we must find ways to continue to improve access to locally grown foods, build long-term food system resilience, and improve emergency food preparedness.

As a result, we strongly support the new proposed priority focus topics of the Honolulu City Council's Agricultural Development Task Force as we feel they reflect the current issues facing O'ahu's farmers, ranchers, and communities.

Mahalo for your consideration and please don't hesitate to reach out with any questions.

With aloha,

Amy Miller
President and CEO, Hawai'i Foodbank

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