A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO EMERGENCY FOOD MANAGEMENT.

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

SECTION 1. The legislature finds that during times of economic crisis, natural disasters, or other emergencies the number of Hawaii residents and families who experience food insecurity increases dramatically. Recent natural disasters like hurricanes, flooding, tsunamis, and volcanic eruptions, as well as health and economic crises such as the coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic and subsequent government mandated shutdowns have forced people out of their homes, disrupted the economy, and upset supply chains.

The legislature finds that local charitable food organizations including food banks, soup kitchens, shelters, and food rescue operations are critical parts of the food safety net during times of crisis. The fallout from natural disasters and similar crises place insurmountable pressure on these organizations, which are often called upon by local authorities to respond to the increased demand on limited budgets. At least
sixteen other states provide some type of government funding support for charitable food organizations.

The legislature also recognizes that during times of crisis local food producers such as farmers, ranchers, fishers, and other food businesses can be negatively impacted. Disruptions to supply chains can result in food spoiling before it can reach its intended destination and work interruption, whether by government orders, pandemics, or other disasters, can adversely affect food producer's ability to bring their products to market.

Charitable food operations can offer a dual solution by not only ensuring families in need have access to enough food to sustain their household, but also by operating as an economic stimulus by purchasing food directly from local Hawaii food businesses. The legislature finds that there is a need to connect community feeding and local food production to emergency funding solutions.

The purpose of this Act is to create the Hawaii emergency food assistance program and, upon an emergency proclamation from the governor, require that moneys be appropriated to the program to fund state food banks to purchase, store, and transport food
grown or produced in Hawaii to local communities for distribution. This program will serve the State's food needs during an emergency, provide local food producers with a market to support those needs, and keep moneys within the State to boost the local economy.

SECTION 2. Chapter 127A, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended by adding two new sections to be appropriately designated and to read as follows:

"§127A-A Hawaii emergency food assistance program. (a) There is established a Hawaii emergency food assistance program to be administered by the department of agriculture during a declared state of emergency to relieve situations of emergency food shortage experienced by families or individuals who reside in the State of Hawaii, including low-income and unemployed families and individuals, by distributing local food to those persons.

(b) Funds shall be made available to food banks located in the State.

(c) Food banks shall use funds to purchase, store, and transport food grown or produced in Hawaii to be distributed to recipients free of charge."
(d) For purposes of this section:

(1) "Food bank" has the same meaning as in title 7 U.S.C. section 7501(5).

(2) "Produced in Hawaii" has the same meaning as in section 486-119(b).

§127A-B Hawaii emergency food assistance program special fund. (a) There is established in the state treasury a Hawaii emergency food assistance program special fund into which shall be deposited the following:

(1) Moneys appropriated to the fund pursuant to section 127A-16;

(2) Appropriations made by the legislature to the special fund;

(3) Gifts, donations, and grants from public agencies and private persons; and

(4) Interest from the special fund.

(b) Moneys in the special fund shall be used to provide immediate relief from food shortages during a declared state of emergency pursuant to section 127A-A. Moneys shall not be expended from the special fund unless a state of emergency has been declared pursuant to section 127A-14.
(c) Moneys deposited into the special fund shall not lapse into the general fund. For purposes of this section, "general fund" has the same meaning as section 35-91.

(d) Expenditures from the Hawaii emergency food assistance program special fund shall be administered and authorized by the department of agriculture.

(e) The Hawaii emergency food assistance program special fund shall not be subject to section 36-27, 36-30, or 37-53."

SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the general fund of the State the sum of $5,000,000 or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2021-2022 and the same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2022-2023 to be deposited into the Hawaii emergency food assistance program special fund.

SECTION 4. There is appropriated out of the Hawaii emergency food assistance program special fund the sum of $5,000,000 or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2021-2022 and the same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2022-2023 for expenditure pursuant to section 2 of this Act.
The sums appropriated shall be expended by the department of agriculture for the purposes of this Act.

SECTION 5. In codifying the new sections added by section 2 of this Act, the revisor of statutes shall substitute appropriate section numbers for the letters used in designating the new sections in this Act.

SECTION 6. New statutory material is underscored.

SECTION 7. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2021.
Report Title:
Department of Agriculture; Emergency Management Agency; Hawaii Emergency Food Assistance Program Special Fund; Appropriation

Description:
Creates the Hawaii emergency food assistance program special fund to be administered by the department of agriculture and appropriates moneys into the fund to feed Hawaii's needy population when a state of emergency has been declared. (SD1)

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