

## For Immediate Release

**Contact:** Janis Wong  
Media Relations, The Kohala Center  
[jwong@kohalacenter.org](mailto:jwong@kohalacenter.org)  
808-887-6411

### **Cottage Food Industry Working Group seeks public comments**

KAMUELA, Hawai‘i—November 11, 2014—The Kohala Center is seeking public comment on proposed regulatory changes that would impact homemade food operations in Hawai‘i.

The proposed recommendations would ease restrictions on homemade food operations, specifically those related to sales locations and the temporary food establishment application process. The proposed permitting process would institute an annual permitting process, versus the current rule requiring operators to reapply for permits every 120 days, and would expand sales opportunities beyond direct-to-consumers sales to include wholesale and retail opportunities.

The recommendations and public comment survey can be found online at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/cottage-food-survey>. While The Kohala Center encourages the public to submit comments via the online survey, input may also be submitted via e-mail to [info@kohalacenter.org](mailto:info@kohalacenter.org) or by mail to The Kohala Center, P.O. Box 437462, Kamuela, HI 96743. The deadline for public comment is Wednesday, November 28.

Recommendations to support Hawai‘i’s homemade food operations were developed by several members of the Hawai‘i Cottage Food Industry Working Group in mid-October in response to legislative mandate [S.C.R. No. 97](#) (2014). The working group included individuals from commodity associations, retail establishments, local university programs, value-added producers, and the Hawai‘i Department of Health. These recommendations propose a new regulatory framework for homemade food operations that would allow foods produced in home kitchens to be sold in more diverse markets over an unrestricted period of time, provided the operator completes required training and secures necessary permits. The proposed regulatory framework draws upon cottage-food laws adopted by forty-one states and includes elements related to food safety training, sanitary guidelines, labeling, allowable foods, and permits.

The development of the recommendations was guided by several principles central to developing vibrant agricultural and value-added food businesses in Hawai‘i, including: food safety is essential in food-related businesses; education and training are important means of achieving

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P.O. Box 437462 | Kamuela, Hawai‘i 96743 | Tel. 808-887-6411 | Fax 808-885-6707 | [www.kohalacenter.org](http://www.kohalacenter.org)

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food safety; proper product labeling is necessary; permits can help promote regulatory compliance; local food production is integral to Hawai‘i’s economic development and food security; and the Hawai‘i Department of Health requires sufficient resources to implement laws and regulations. In addition, the group cited several state and federal mandates to increase local food production, including:

- Hawai‘i’s “Increased Food Security and Food Self-Sufficiency Strategy,” produced by the Office of Planning’s Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism, which notes that replacing just 10 percent of the food Hawai‘i currently imports would amount to approximately \$313 million dollars remaining in the State’s economy; and
- The United States Department of Agriculture’s allocation of \$27 million in competitive grants to support local food efforts such as food hubs and local processors.

Funding for the Cottage Food Business Working Group is provided by the Ulupono Initiative, with additional support from the Sustainable Economies Law Center and The Kohala Center.

#### **About The Kohala Center**

Founded in the year 2000, The Kohala Center (<http://www.kohalacenter.org>) is an independent, community-based center for research, conservation, and education. We turn research and traditional knowledge into action, so that communities in Hawai‘i and around the world can thrive—ecologically, economically, culturally, and socially.