

REPORT TO THE THIRTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE (2026 REGULAR SESSION)

REPORT OF THE INTERAGENCY FOOD SYSTEMS WORKING GROUP

IN RESPONSE TO ACT 239 (2025)

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Table of Contents

1. Executive Summary
2. Introduction
3. Statutory Mandates and Statewide Food Systems Context
4. Background: Food Systems Conditions, Barriers, and Opportunities
5. Integration with SR111 Sustainable Food Systems Framework
6. Working Group Governance, Decision-Making, and Process
7. Summary of Meetings and Accomplishments to Date
8. Interagency Coordination Framework for 2025–2027 (Act 239 Implementation)
9. Initial Deliverables and Progress Toward SR111 Requirements
10. Recommendations & Proposed Legislation
11. Appendices (Meeting Minutes, Data Inputs, Workplan Template)

Executive Summary

Act 239 (2025) establishes a **Statewide Interagency Food Systems Coordination Team** and a **formal Interagency Food Systems Working Group (WG)** housed at ADC, co-chaired by DBEDT and HDOA. The WG is charged with:

- Developing governance and operating protocols
- Coordinating with county and community-led food systems planning
- Identifying resources
- Designing communication systems
- Creating time-bound implementation plans and metrics
- Conducting policy impact analysis

This report outlines early implementation progress, initial coordination activities, and alignment between Act 239 and the SR111 Food Systems Working Group Framework (2024), which established statewide priorities around governance, data systems, biosecurity, land/water infrastructure, and institutional purchasing.

Two meetings of the Act 239 Working Group (10/17/25 and 11/21/25) produced foundational agreements on:

- Report structure
- Section assignments
- Coordination needs across land, water, data, biosecurity, infrastructure, and institutional purchasing
- Priority commodities and data gaps
- Engagement with county plans and food access coalitions
- Alignment with federal funding and resilience efforts

Many of SR111's recommendations—such as establishing governance processes, mapping county priorities, identifying infrastructure needs, and designing a statewide coordination framework—have already been partially completed through Act 239 implementation to date.

1. Introduction

Act 239 advances Hawaii's commitment to:

- Doubling local food production by 2030 (Act 151)
- Meeting institutional local purchasing mandates (Acts 175 & 176)
- Improving access to healthy food and reducing food insecurity
- Strengthening resilience to climate change and federal supply chain disruptions

Act 239 became effective July 1, 2025 and appropriated **\$100,000** to initiate statewide coordination via ADC and DBEDT.

The Act 239 Working Group began meeting in October 2025 and follows a structure modeled on the **SR111 Sustainable Food Systems Working Group**, whose report and framework guide this first-year implementation plan.

2. Statewide Food Systems Planning and Mandates

Hawai‘i's current mandates relevant to Act 239 include:

- **Act 151 (2019):** Double local food production and increase exports
- **Act 175 (2021):** DOE must reach 30% local meals by 2030
- **Act 176 (2021):** All state departments must hit 10% local procurement by 2025, 18% by 2030
- **Hawai‘i 2050 Sustainability Plan:** Legally mandated guiding plan

Act 239 forms the **implementation backbone** connecting these mandates to operational plans, data systems, and agency coordination.

3. Background: Conditions, Barriers & Opportunities

Consistent across SR111 research and Working Group Meetings:

Key Barriers

- Invasive species & biosecurity threats
- High production, labor, and land costs

- Lack of processing and cold storage infrastructure
- Limited inter-island logistics data
- Fragmented data systems across HDOA, DOE, DBEDT, DOH
- Need for land/water infrastructure and irrigation repairs

Opportunities

- Regional kitchens (DOE) and FPIN facilities (DBEDT/ADC)
- County-level agricultural plans and food access plans
- Off-grade produce utilization and value-added innovation
- Export mechanisms that can backstop local production
- Federal grants for resilience and food security

Act 239 is positioned to solve coordination gaps SR111 identified.

4. Alignment Between Act 239 & SR111 Deliverables

The SR111 Working Group delivered a **Food and Agricultural Interagency Coordination Framework (2025–2026)** containing:

- Governance models
- County integration
- Data and metrics priorities
- Biosecurity/land/water strategies
- Institutional purchasing pathways

Act 239 has already accomplished several SR111 recommended steps:

SR111 Requirement	Status under Act 239	Evidence
Establish governance framework	Under development, assigned to WG	10/17/25 Minutes: governance section assigned, protocols drafted
Identify interagency coordination priorities	Completed – Act 239 mandates + WG themes	Meetings emphasize data, land, water, biosecurity, procurement

SR111 Requirement	Status under Act 239	Evidence
Incorporate county plans	Underway	Counties presented (Hawai‘i, Honolulu, Maui, Kaua‘i) via SR111
Map data gaps & establish metrics	In progress	WG identified need for data systems, commodity maps, dashboards
Infrastructure roadmap	Launched	ADC presented slaughter, egg-breaking, irrigation, FPIN facilities
Policy impact analysis tools	WG mandated to develop tools	Act 239 p.5 requirement

Act 239 formalizes the long-term governance structure SR111 recommended.

5. Working Group Governance & Process

Modeled on the SR111 structure and supported by Act 239 statutory requirements:

Membership

As defined in Act 239:

- HDOA Chair (Co-Chair)
- DBEDT Director (Co-Chair)
- One House designee
- One Senate designee
- Experts invited by co-chairs

Governance Development

At Meeting #1 (10/17/25):

- WG confirmed scope aligned to Act 239
- Assigned drafting of Governance, Coordination, Implementation, Data, and Legislative sections
- Adopted structure mirroring SR111 Report

SR111's Appendix A governance frameworks will be integrated into Act 239's final model.

6. Summary of Meetings & Accomplishments

Meeting #1 – October 17, 2025

Key Outcomes

- Agreement on report sections and drafting assignments
- Adoption of SR111-aligned structure
- Identification of cross-sector themes:
 - Biosecurity
 - Infrastructure gaps (cold storage, processing, regional kitchens)
 - Data gaps (commodities, off-grade, land/water)
 - Institutional purchasing
- Decision to start with priority commodities: dairy, cattle, selected produce
- County alignment recognized as critical
- Visitor industry identified as emerging institutional buyer
- Legislative report due December 31, 2025

Action Items

- Submit materials to WG inbox
- Begin commodity data and county coordination outreach
- Prepare drafts for November and December meetings

Meeting #2 – November 21, 2025

Key Outcomes

- Approval of prior minutes
- Presentations by Amanda Shaw and Hunter Heavilin on:
 - Governance models under Sunshine Law

- Data systems (trade dashboards, inter-island logistics, price monitoring)
- Dual-circulation economic model (local + export markets)
- Irrigation and land mapping needs
- Role of aggregation and DOE kitchens

Major Themes

- Need for federal resilience funding (due to unstable USDA/FEMA cycles)
- Consideration of biotax as infrastructure source
- Alignment between energy siting and ag land preservation
- Housing proximate to farms to solve workforce needs
- Need for statewide commodity maps, irrigation maps, and processing capacity maps

Action Items

- Provide county plan links
- Submit additional presenters
- Investigate data system upgrades
- Identify models (Maui DOE) for statewide replication
- Evaluate feasibility of resilient relief fund
- Prepare December meetings and finalize draft report

7. Interagency Coordination Framework for 2025–2027 (Act 239 Implementation)

This framework integrates Act 239 requirements with SR111 priorities and Working Group decisions.

I. Governance & Statewide Coordination

- Develop protocols, decision rules, membership criteria (using SR111 Appendix A)
- Formalize MOUs across departments
- Establish PIGs (Permitted Interaction Groups) for:
 - Governance

- Data & Metrics
- Institutional Purchasing
- Land/Water/Infrastructure

II. Data & Metrics

- Restore HDOA's Market Analysis Branch
- Build shared ag data system (production, prices, inter-island traffic)
- Create baseline dashboards for Acts 151, 175, 176 compliance

III. Biosecurity & Invasive Species

- Support Act 231 implementation
- Establish ROE (Rules of Engagement) for interagency response
- Fund Level 3 biosecurity facility

IV. Land, Water & Infrastructure

- Create interagency Land & Water Action Group
- Conduct land inventory & crop suitability mapping
- Support ADC irrigation CIP requests (Wahiawā, Kekaha, East Kaua'i)

V. Institutional Purchasing & Value-Added Infrastructure

- Align DOE regional kitchens with FPIN and ADC processing facilities
- Identify procurement barriers (SPO, DOE, DOH, UH)
- Support Phase 2 of DOE regional kitchen commercialization

8. Initial Deliverables and Progress toward SR111 Requirements

The SR111 Report required:

- Governance structure
- Implementation plan outline
- Alignment with SDGs
- Integration of county priorities
- Proposed legislation

Act 239 Working Group has already fulfilled or initiated all five.

Notably:

- Hawaii County, Maui, Kaua'i and Honolulu priorities are included
- SDG alignment included in tables and actions
- Governance drafting underway
- Interagency Framework from SR111 serves as de facto implementation plan

9. Recommendations & Proposed Legislation (2026 Session)

1. Appropriation to fully fund statewide food systems coordination

Amount: multi-year operational funding for staff at ADC, DBEDT, OPSD, HDOA.

2. Restoration of HDOA data capacity

\$900,000 to restore Market Analysis Branch.
(SR111 & Act 239 working group priority.)

3. Biosecurity infrastructure appropriation

Funding for:

- Level 3 biocontrol facility
- Invasive species rapid response ROE

4. Land/Water infrastructure CIP package

Including Wahiawā Irrigation System multiphase project.

5. Institutional purchasing modernization bill

To:

- Clarify Act 175/176 procurement definitions
- Enable DOE/DOH/DPS/DOD/UH to purchase from regional kitchens and FPIN processors

6. Resilience Fund

Modeled after Meeting #2 discussion:

- Use barrel tax as a backstop for emergency food procurement.

10. Next Steps (December 2025 – June 2026)

December 2025

- Review full report draft
- Approve governance protocols
- Finalize legislative proposals

Q1 2026

- Launch PIGs
- Begin county consultations
- Draft statewide data dashboard framework

Q2 2026

- Submit Act 239 Implementation Plan to Legislature
- Present budget requests for FY27–28
- Complete commodity and land/water maps

Ongoing

- Annual report due 20 days prior to each session
- Continuous alignment with SR111 Interagency Framework