



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Written Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Agriculture
Wednesday, February 1, 2017 at 8:30 am

By

Rachel Novotny, Interim Dean

And

J. Kenneth Grace, Associate Dean
College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

HB 781 – RELATING TO THE P-20 AGRICULTURE EDUCATION WORKING GROUP

Chair Creagan, Vice Chair DeCoite, and members of the House Committee on Agriculture:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 781 which appropriates funds for the hiring of a coordinator and for interisland travel and operating expenses of the P-20 Agriculture Education Working Group within the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (CTAHR). This bill also outlines the duties of the working group and opens participation in the working group to additional persons and entities.

SR 80 (Regular Session of 2015) requested that CTAHR convene a working group to develop a coordinated framework of support for preschool through post-secondary (P-20) agriculture education and a plan for implementation by December 31, 2017; and submit reports to the legislature detailing progress in planning and implementation prior to the 2017, 2018, and 2019 legislative sessions. In order to accomplish this task, a key recommendation made in the working group report submitted prior to the current legislative session was to request funding to support a permanent coordinator position for the effort, along with expenses for meeting attendance, etc., incurred by the working group members. We strongly support HB 781 provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities as indicated in the University's Board of Regents Approved Executive Biennium Budget.

The working group is a very inclusive effort to coordinate agricultural education, and the working group report also describes long-term goals, and recommends participation of several additional stakeholder groups along with coordination with the Agricultural Workforce Advisory Group convened by the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations. HB 781 formalizes these recommendations, along with creating the coordinator position. An appropriation of \$200,000 for each year is requested to support salary and working group expenditures.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of HB 781.