



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

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by
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HB 847 HD1 – RELATING TO UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII RESEARCH

Chairs Keith-Agaran and Tokuda, Vice Chairs Rhoads and Dela Cruz, and members of both committees:

The University of Hawai'i (UH) supports this bill that will provide UH express statutory authority to encourage, promote, financially support and directly participate in the commercialization of intellectual property generated by its researchers, students and alumni.

After observing how mainland public universities promote innovation and research, it is clear that UH needs to be more active in its support and more focused in its efforts to commercialize its research products. These efforts, in turn, will contribute to a dynamic and more diverse workforce in the state and promote economic health.

If a clear legal framework authorizing UH to participate directly and indirectly in new commercial enterprises were established, UH could more efficiently contribute to the Hawai'i Innovation Initiative's goal to help diversify the state's economy through the creation of a vibrant innovation and entrepreneurial ecosystem. This express legal authority would reduce the uncertainty in creating, financing, and operating new ventures affiliated with UH, and could thereby induce greater private sector participation to commercialize promising discoveries.

The University of Hawai'i's brand will also be enhanced. Currently, UH lags its peer institutions in having the support infrastructure to encourage and nurture technology transfer. To keep UH competitive with its mainland peers in the competition for external commercial research sponsorship and in the completion for hiring entrepreneurial faculty or staff, we need to develop a capacity to commercialize its intellectual property.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this measure.