HB 1968 – RELATING TO THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII COLLEGE OF TROPICAL AGRICULTURE AND HUMAN RESOURCES COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE

Chair McKelvey, Vice Chair Hashem, and members of the committee:

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of HB 1968, which appropriates funds to the University of Hawai’i at Mānoa College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (CTAHR) Cooperative Extension Service (CES) for one full-time ornamental plant Extension Agent.

As indicated in the bill, the CTAHR CES has experienced a significant decrease in personnel. The CTAHR CES is unique in that it is the branch of the University that works throughout the state with its citizens to provide solutions to their lives. The CES translates research into actionable programs with the expectation of helping growers become more efficient and more economically viable. Given the high wholesale value of the ornamental plant industry in Hawai’i (approximately $500 million and 12,000 jobs), the industry has identified a need for an agent. Significant problems face the industry including new pests and diseases, water relations, and climate change. An Extension Agent, being the bridge between research and action on the ground, will help the industry address these challenges.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in strong support of HB 1968, provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities as indicated in our BOR Approved Supplemental Budget.