



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

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and Economic Development, Tourism and Technology
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by

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SB 137 – RELATING TO UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII RESEARCH

Chairs Kahele and Wakai, Vice Chairs Kidani and Taniguchi, and members of the committees:

The University of Hawai'i (UH) supports this measure.

The purpose of this bill is to provide the University of Hawai'i clear statutory authority to frame and support its various activities and initiatives to develop and commercialize the intellectual property created by UH faculty, staff or alumni. This commercialization, in turn, will contribute to a more diverse workforce in the state and promote a robust and dynamic economy.

Because the University of Hawai'i is the sole public institution for higher education for the state, UH is especially well-suited for this task.

If this measure is enacted, the University of Hawai'i will be able to undertake commercialization activity with greater legal certainty and clarity. These activities include vetting or "proving" commercial concepts based on UH research, providing mentorship and entrepreneurial guidance to faculty or research staff, transferring UH-owned intellectual property via patents or licenses, or actively participating in public/private joint development and partnerships. Third parties, similarly, will be more willing to contribute their resources and shoulder some of the risks on forward-looking joint ventures or collaborative technology transfer activities, if the legal parameters were more clearly established.

The University of Hawai'i's brand as a research and teaching institution 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 garnering external research sponsorship and in hiring entrepreneurial faculty or staff, it must develop its commercialization capacity. Clear statutory authority is an essential component to develop and frame UH's capacity to commercialize its intellectual property.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.