



# UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI'I SYSTEM

## Legislative Testimony

---

Testimony Presented Before the  
House Committee on Higher Education  
Tuesday, March 14, 2017 at 2:00 p.m.

by

Vassilis L. Syrmos, Vice President for Research and Innovation  
University of Hawai'i System

### SB 137 SD2 – RELATING TO UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII RESEARCH

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

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

This bill provides UH with clear statutory authority to frame and support its various activities to develop and commercialize the intellectual property created by UH faculty, staff or alumni. Successful commercialization, in turn, will contribute to a more diverse workforce in the state, promote a robust and dynamic innovation sector of our economy, provide better performing products or services to the consumer, and garner some economic return to the publicly supported UH.

The innovation and commercialization activities include vetting or “proving” the commercial potential of discoveries based on UH research, providing mentorship and entrepreneurial guidance to faculty or research staff, transferring UH-owned intellectual property to third parties via patents or licenses, or actively participating in public/private joint development, startup companies and partnerships. Third parties 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 attracting external research sponsorship and in hiring entrepreneurial faculty or staff, the UH must develop its commercialization capacity.

Clear statutory authority is an essential component to develop UH's capacity to commercialize its intellectual property.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.