



# UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

## Legislative Testimony

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Testimony Presented Before the  
Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment  
And

Senate Committee on Higher Education  
Tuesday, February 7, 2017 at 1:00 p.m.

By

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And

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### SB 228 – MAKING AN APPROPRIATION FOR RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT, MARKETING, AND CONSERVATION OF 'ULU

Chairs Gabbard and Kahele, Vice Chairs Riviere and Kidani, and members of the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment and Committee on Higher Education:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB 228, which appropriates funds for the research, development, marketing, and conservation of 'ulu.

We support this measure provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities as indicated in the University's Board of Regents Approved Executive Biennium Budget.

Prior to European contact in the 1700s, and into the early 1880s, 'ulu (breadfruit) groves were a common feature of the landscape and Hawaiian agriculture. The enormous 'ulu plantations of west Hawai'i Island fascinated early European visitors. However, by the late 1800s, these groves had all but vanished due to depopulation and changing land use patterns. Clearly, 'ulu is readily cultivated in Hawai'i, but is essentially nonexistent today as a commercial crop or food staple. However, with renewed interest in this excellent food crop, and your support, this is poised to change. Re-development of 'ulu as an important crop in Hawai'i would contribute greatly to the goal of doubling local food production.

The Breadfruit Institute of the National Botanical Garden has credited the 2004 CTAHR publication "Hawaiian Breadfruit – Ethnobotany, Nutrition, and Human Ecology" with providing a blueprint for modern efforts to revitalize breadfruit in Hawai'i. We believe in the potential for 'ulu to again become a common fixture of our agricultural landscape, a valuable commercial crop and an important part of food security and self-sufficiency in Hawai'i.

CTAHR faculty , in collaboration with the Breadfruit Institute and producers, are currently involved in efforts to address 'ulu cultivation and processing, and to develop new products such as gluten-free 'ulu flour. In the past several years, thousands of trees have been planted in Hawai'i. However, we are lacking even basic information on variety selection for different locations, fertilization regimes, best practices for pruning, efficient harvesting methods, and fruit nutrient profiles. Market development and development of value-added products are also key needs if 'ulu is to become an economically sustainable crop in Hawai'i.

As with other regionally-important crops, it is very difficult to obtain nationally competitive grant funds to pursue this work. If the State of Hawai'i is truly committed to increasing food cultivation and security in Hawai'i, then we must find the financial resources within the state to develop and establish this extremely promising food crop.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in strong support of SB 228.