



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment
Friday, February 3, 2017 at 1:15 p.m.

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SB 624 – RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Riviere, and members of the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment:

Thank you for the opportunity to offer comments on SB 624, which requires the board of agriculture, in cooperation with the office of the governor, to develop a strategic plan to double local food production and exports by 2020; and requires the board of agriculture to submit a report to the legislature prior to the regular session of 2018 in order to codify the strategic plan and benchmarks.

The University of Hawai'i fully supports the Governor's goal of doubling local food production. As a member of the Board of Agriculture, we recognize the need for careful and rapid planning to achieve this goal. In October 2012, the Office of Planning issued the "Increased Food Security and Food Self-Sufficiency Strategy," part of a three-volume report by a multi-agency steering committee for food security and self-sufficiency. The strategy included specific recommendations to move Hawai'i forward in food security, and away from providing only 11% of our own food. We believe that this report would be useful as a basis for the specific planning effort requested in SB 624.

However, in order to collect the necessary data and information, and establish benchmarks, within the timeframe requested in SB 624, an intensive targeted effort by dedicated contracted personnel will be necessary. Thus, in order to accomplish the objectives of SB 624, we believe that an appropriation of funds to the Department of Agriculture should be included for this purpose. We would defer to the Department of Agriculture on fiscal details.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on SB 624.