



# UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

## Legislative Testimony

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Testimony Presented Before the  
House Committee on Finance  
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By  
Nicholas Comerford  
Dean, College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources  
And  
Michael Bruno  
Interim Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs  
Vice Chancellor for Research  
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

### SB 3030 SD1 HD1 – RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Chair Luke, Vice Chair Cullen, and members of the House Committee on Finance:

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of the over-all concept of SB 3030 SD1 HD1 which appropriates funds to the Department of Agriculture for establishing a farmer mentor program, as well as curriculum development for the program in the area of whole farm systems.

CTAHR strongly supports a whole farm system approach that focuses on maintaining and enhancing soil health. Whole farm systems include diverse approaches to agriculture ranging from certified organic farming to integrated livestock/farming. The basic component of these systems is sustainable soil organic matter management, combined with integrated pest management under a verifiable economic umbrella. They typically include conservation tillage, cover crops and a well-designed cropping system.

Another important aspect of this curriculum should be teaching the economics of scale in order to assure that the farmers being trained in the program understand that a commercial operation has to be a certain size in order to become profitable (depending on the value of the crop), particularly given the costs of production involving food safety regulations. A whole farm system has the opportunity to lower the production inputs, hence making the operation more commercial.

We also suggest that a necessary component of a whole farm system curriculum is that it be based on well-documented science that passes the test of the peer review system.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of the over-all concept of the bill, but leave it to the Department of Agriculture to decide if this is within its mission.