SCR 73/SR 51 – REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, AND UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI‘I AT MANOA COLLEGE OF TROPICAL AGRICULTURE AND HUMAN RESOURCES TO CREATE A STRATEGY FOR STUDENTS TO LEARN ABOUT MODERN FARMING

Chairs Gabbard, Kidani, Kim, Vice Chair Ruderman, and members of the Committees:

Thank you for the opportunity to express our support for the intent, but not for the action of SCR 73/SR 51. We take this position for the following reasons.

1. In 2015 the legislature passed Senate Resolution 80 that had a similar intent. Based on that resolution the College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (CTAHR) convened the P-20 Agriculture Education Working Group. This Working Group met for three years, with no monetary support, providing annual reports, with a final report provided in December, 2018 entitled: “Final Report on a Coordinated Framework of Support for Preschool through Post-Secondary (P-20) Agriculture Education in Hawai‘i. Senate Resolution 80 (2015).”

2. The main recommendation of that report to the legislature was to implement a coordinated framework of support for P-20 Agriculture Education by establishing a Coordinator position within CTAHR that was funded for the purpose of overseeing ongoing communication and spearheading the recommended Implementation Plan.

3. The Implementation Plan was:
   a. Teacher Development;
   b. curriculum Integration; and,
c. encourage the establishment and funding of Agriculture Educator positions at the state, community and school levels that directly support a and b above.

4. The P-20 Working Group recommended legislation and that recommendation became currently proposed legislation: SB 762 SD1 HD1 and HB 1102 HD2, where the latter is no longer active.

5. This current resolution asks for a curriculum of modern agriculture which, in effect, is implied in 3b above. It would be the obvious intent of any process to develop curricula that deal with the most effective and the most appropriate types of agriculture that fit the climate and needs of the state.

6. This current resolution also notes that education is key to the production of future farmers. To that end SB 261 was introduced in the legislature that addresses the training of future farmers. SB 261 was introduced to support GoFarm, which has had a strong record of training new farmers outside the standard educational system, but that bill is no longer active.

While we support the intent of the resolution to develop strong curricula to be taught in the schools, we believe that this has already been done. The P-20 Agriculture Education Working Group involved participation from 16 government organizations and 21 non-governmental organizations. The Working Group met regularly over 3 years at the request of the legislature. The Working Group has gone beyond the current resolution and included teacher development as well as being proactive in increasing the number of agriculture teachers. The Working Group produced a report and recommendations for legislation that resulted in two bills. We feel that this current resolution does not significantly add to the work that was done. Since the legislature has expressed sincere interest over a period of years in the need for agriculture education from PreK-20, it is now time for the legislature to act by passing SB 762 SD1 HD1.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment in support of the intent of this resolution, while noting that the intent has already been covered by a previous resolution and that legislation that would move this issue forward is now pending.