Statement of

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before the

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

March 31, 2004
State Capitol, Conference Room 309, 3:00 p.m.

in consideration of

HCR 111

STRONGLY URGING THE GOVERNOR TO RELEASE THE FUNDS APPROPRIATED FOR THE ACQUISITION OF PARADISE PARK IN MANOA

Chair Takai, Vice Chair Tamayo and Committee Members.

I am in strong support of HCR 111 for the acquisition of Paradise Park in Manoa, an ideal site for the establishment of a Pacific Center for Ecosystem Science. This setting is in a natural ecosystem, a rain forest not far away from the Manoa Campus of the University of Hawaii, and next to the University’s Lyon Arboretum.

Our medical school has an Ecology and Health program that participates in several research studies and serves as the editorial office of a new international journal, EcoHealth. This program has become internationally recognized. Our medical school would like to provide leadership in certain aspects of this Pacific Center for Ecosystem Science as it relates to human health.

The environmental ecosystem has an impact on the health and well being of communities and individuals. As our natural resources, such as the water we drink, the air we breathe, the soil that grows our food, and the oceans that give us the fish we eat become limited or polluted, we will go hungry, starve, or become sick. The medical school desires to provide leadership in the effects that ecosystem health has on the health of communities and individuals. A sick society can never reach its potential economically, educationally, or socially.

Because Hawaii is a closed ecosystem, we are more concerned about the total environment, perhaps more so than any other state. But, we have to do more to preserve and protect our environment. We have the opportunity and potential to take the lead in this important area of research, education, and environmental policy. Hawaii can become a leader in this effort.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.