



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Written Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Higher Education
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by

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and

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HB 1420 RELATING TO THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII

Chair Chang, Vice Chair Nakashima, and members of the Committee:

I am Jim Donovan, Director of Athletics for the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, and I am presenting testimony today for the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. We are in strong support of HB 1420, relating to authorizing the issuance of general obligation bonds for capital improvement projects to improve certain UH athletic facilities, provided it does not adversely affect our UH priorities as set in our budget request and provided it is consistent with our campus priorities.

We do appreciate the concerns in this measure for needed repairs for our campuses' athletic facilities. With the exception of Stan Sheriff Center, which was completed in 1994, most of the athletic facilities were built in the early 1980's, or even before that. Some of these facilities are in need of major repair or renovation to bring them up to the current standard of our peer institutions in the Western Athletic Conference and other NCAA institutions we compete against annually.

Specifically, Les Murakami Stadium, the Stan Sheriff Center and both the men's and women's locker rooms are in need of additional renovations. For example, the main women's locker room in the Athletic Complex has not been updated or renovated since it's construction in 1982; the roof leaks at the Stan Sheriff Center in heavy rains; and the batting cage at Les Murakami Stadium was built in the 1970's and is overdue for replacement. As facilities are one of the key factors in recruiting, any improvements made to our facilities have a direct impact on the quality of our teams – and improved quality of our teams helps increase fan and corporate sponsor revenues, which are critical in the department's annual operating budget.

In addition, a special opportunity exists for us to leverage a public/private partnership with the construction of the Clarence T.C. Ching Complex at the site formerly known as Cooke Field. With the donation of \$5 million dollars from the Clarence T.C. Ching Foundation, there is an unprecedented opportunity to complete a new facility that can

be utilized not only by the University of Hawai'i, but also our local High School athletic programs. As a requirement of the Clarence T.C. Ching Foundation, matching funds must be encumbered to utilize their donation. We believe this "leveraged donation" would be an excellent opportunity for our State to build a facility that could benefit many in our community.

Further, many of the classrooms, studios, meeting rooms, offices and student/staff locker rooms in the main athletic complex have not been renovated since its opening in 1982. The auditorium is in dire need of refurbishment, and is currently sub-standard as compared to our peer institutions.

I am Luoluo Hong, the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs at the University of Hawai'i at Hilo; since April 1, 2008, I have also served as Acting Athletic Director. I am presenting testimony today in support of H.B. No. 1420, as well. As is the case with UH Manoa, all of our facilities are in need of major repair or renovation to bring them up to the current standard of our peer institutions in the Pacific West Conference and other NCAA institutions we compete against annually. We also have insufficient facilities to meet the needs of the 13 programs we currently sponsor. In addition, we are committed to ensuring that our student-athletes practice and play in facilities that are safe and up-to-date.

The request for funding to support the planning, design, construction and equipment for a regulation multipurpose field that can be used by both our Women's Soccer and Softball teams is first and foremost critical to our Title IX compliance efforts. UH Hilo must ensure access to equitable facilities for our female student-athletes. Further, this project combines what was previously two projects into just one, thus allowing for cost efficiency and maximization of existing land resources.

It is also important to note that this project would allow for practices and competitions to take place on facilities managed by UH Hilo, thus ensuring that the facility can be maintained in a manner which better ensures student-athlete safety. At present, UH Hilo is relying on off-campus facilities overseen by external entities which reduces our ability to control risks. Finally, as we face tough economic times in the years ahead, including rising costs of team travel, this project allows for the possibility to host home competitions actually on campus and thus could serve as a source of revenue generation for the Office of Intercollegiate Athletics.

I strongly support this endeavor and that of our colleagues at UH Manoa.

Speaking on behalf of the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa and University of Hawai'i at Hilo athletics departments, we strongly support H.B. No. 1420, relating to authorizing the issuance of general obligation bonds for capital improvement projects to improve certain UH athletic facilities.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.