



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Higher Education
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by
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HB 1612 – RELATING TO THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII–WEST OAHU

Chair Choy, Vice Chair Ichiyama, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony on HB 1612 – Relating to the University of Hawaii –West Oahu. The University of Hawai'i respectfully opposes this bill, which seeks to provide the Hawai'i Community Development Agency (HCDA) authority for development of the University of Hawai'i-West O'ahu (UHWO) lands that are for non-educational purposes.

In 2002, Campbell Estates conveyed a 500-acre parcel to the University through the State Department of Land and Natural Resources. The land was granted with the understanding that the University would build a 4-year baccalaureate campus to serve the growing west side community and that non-campus lands would be leveraged to provide revenues to offset development costs and generate funds to ensure partial financial sustainability for the campus.

Last year, the University completed a strategic review of the overall land plan for UHWO, which was approved by the Board of Regents (BOR). This plan envisions the establishment of a 20,000-student campus within the next 30 years together with the development of a vibrant, interactive University village district. Based on this future vision, the BOR approved 300 acres of the makai parcel to be designated for University campus and campus-related uses, with the remainder of 168 acres designated for Community Business Mixed-Use (BMX-3) zoning. BMX-3 is the current zoning for the majority of the 168-acre property. The intent of BMX-3 districts is to provide areas for both commercial and residential uses.

In light of the current plans for the UHWO campus, HB 1612 raises several key concerns:

- The University has solicited qualifications for a private-sector master developer to develop a University District and to provide the planning, development, infrastructure, and financing expertise that will ensure a thoughtful, phased approach to the development of non-campus lands that will provide an ongoing revenue stream to support the operations, maintenance and growth of the UHWO campus. The master developer would have a track record of successful

project implementations in commercial, retail, and residential developments. The developer would also bring expertise and experience in creating University communities that attract diverse and stimulating demographics. Phase II of the solicitation is scheduled to be issued next month.

- HCDA has had success in the development and transformation of Kakaako as it has invested millions to upgrade infrastructure, and has control and jurisdiction over this unique urban district. However, the scale and purpose of UHWO University District is to create a development in this area that will provide a mix of retail and commercial businesses together with appropriate residential components that will encourage synergistic activities and create an energetic, livable community that complements and enhances the UHWO and its higher education purpose.
- It is critical that UHWO lands remain under the University's control in order to accommodate the higher education needs and demands of the State as its population and demographics change over time.

In closing, all University lands are held for educational purposes, including those for UH West O'ahu. To that end, the University strongly believes that this bill will not be in the best interests of the University or the State of Hawai'i.