



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented before the
Senate Committee on Water, Land, Agriculture, and Hawaiian Affairs
February 13, 2009 at 3:30 p.m.

by

Virginia S. Hinshaw, Chancellor

and

Andrew G. Hashimoto, Dean and Director
College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

SB 1116 - RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Chair Hee, Vice Chair Tokuda, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Andrew Hashimoto, and I serve as Dean and Director of the UH Mānoa College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (CTAHR). I am presenting testimony on behalf of Virginia Hinshaw, Chancellor of the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa (UHM).

The purpose of SB 1116 is to establish an organic agriculture task force under the administration of the Department of Agriculture (HDOA) to develop a business plan for the Hawai'i organic food center, and to appropriate funds for the task force to carry out its purposes.

Since provisions for the task force and accompanying appropriation are not within the UH or HDOA's budget requests, the UHM supports the intent of the bill provided it does not adversely affect UH priorities in its budget request, most notably in health and safety, and repairs and maintenance issues. Addressing these urgent needs is critical to our ability to perform our core mission for the State of Hawai'i.

The bill supports local agriculture and farmers, and promotes safe, fresh, high-quality, locally-grown organic produce. The bill is in keeping with the State's initiative to increase Hawai'i's food self-sufficiency from the current reality of importing 85% of all food we consume, and relates to UHM's vision to actively help Hawai'i diversify its economy, ensure a sustainable environment, and strengthen its communities.

CTAHR is willing to participate as a member in the organic agriculture task force, as specified in the bill, should the task force be established.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.