



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Finance
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by
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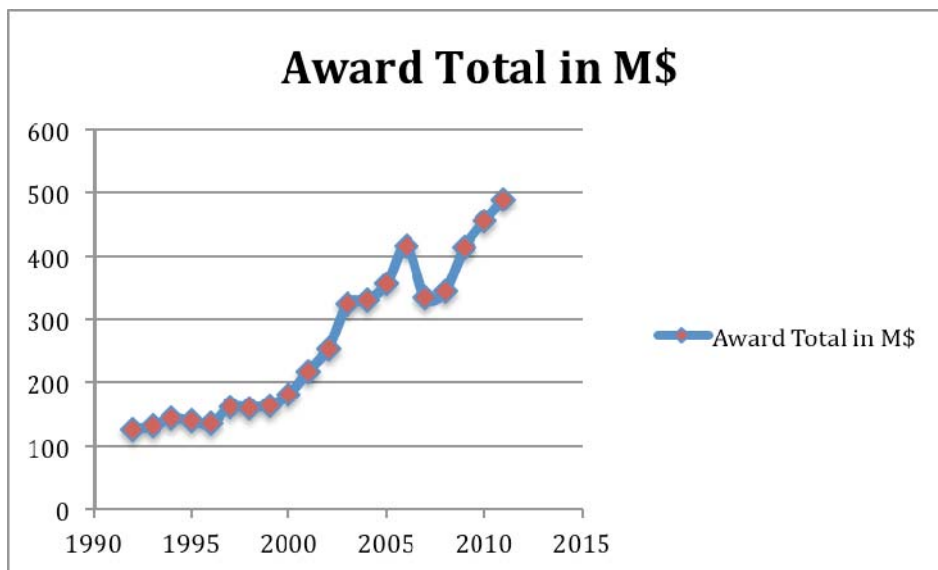
SB 2941 SD2 HD1 – RELATING TO HIGH TECHNOLOGY

Chair Oshiro, Vice Chair Lee and members of the committee:

The University strongly OPPOSES the section of this bill that requires the University to extend the lease of the Mānoa Innovation Center to HTDC for 25 more years after the present lease expires in 2015.

In 1990 the University of Hawai'i (UH) entered into an agreement under which the (then) new Mānoa Innovation Center (MIC), constructed on University land, was to be leased to the High Technology Development Corporation (HTDC) for a 25-year term, after which the facility was to revert to UH. All parties agreed, in writing, to this arrangement.

Since beginning of the current lease, University research awards have doubled in **each** of the past decades as shown by the graph below.



It is the goal of the University, in research, *to double the annual awards once more in the coming decade*. In order to accomplish this, new and remodeled facilities are essential and an expanded MIC will play an important role in achieving that goal.

It is important to emphasize the commitment of UH to the development of a robust research and technology industry in Hawai'i. Last year UH President Greenwood convened a blue ribbon task force to recommend key changes in how the University develops this research industry. Participants at our recently completed *E Kamakani Noi'i* conference further focused our ideas on what it will take to build a 21st century economy in Hawai'i.

We are still in the formative stages of defining exactly what form and structure will best support this needed innovation agenda. However, we expect that these activities will be based at the Mānoa Innovation Center, which is already a significant site for the University's research enterprise. In fact, UH and our related programs are already the single largest set of tenants in the facility and we are paying the largest portion of the rent, which goes to support HTDC operations. We could occupy all the existing space at MIC, with UH programs that are renting facilities elsewhere, immediately.

President Greenwood and UH leadership held preliminary discussions with the HTDC Executive Director and some of the HTDC board members. UH emphasized our willingness to let HTDC remain in the MIC facility after 2015 if they so choose. Our discussions further explored a range of possibilities, including HTDC playing a role in implementing the University's innovation agenda. These discussions are continuing and we will be happy to keep the Legislature informed of our progress.

The University does support the development of a technology park on O'ahu, the only island without such a capability. However, the Mānoa Innovation Center is not large enough to house the activities normally found within a technology park, so another venue should be found to provide full support for emerging technology businesses. HTDC would be the natural organization to lead such an initiative and UH would support them.

We believe this is an opportune time for the State to invest in the development of high technology to diversify and strengthen our economy. But this should not be done at the expense of research growth and the new innovation agenda being developed by UH.

We urge you to reject the section of this bill pertaining to the Manoa Innovation Center and, at the very least, preserve the agreement made with UH at the time MIC was constructed.