SB 2344 – RELATING TO CLIMATE CHANGE

Chairs Gabbard and Solomon, Vice Chairs Ruderman and Galuteria, and Members of the Senate Committees assembled: The University of Hawai‘i is in favor of SB 2344, which establishes an interagency climate council with the task of implementing a general state policy to address climate change through 2050.

Climate change has become a dangerous, socially disruptive reality that threatens the future sustainability of life in the Hawaiian Islands. By developing an interagency climate council to implement a general state policy to address climate change, you will be taking a strong step toward achieving maximum protection of public health and safety as well as protection of natural resources for future generations.

We suggest that sea level rise should receive initial focus as an urgent impact for us to address while building a framework of research, planning and coordination to address other impacts. An initial emphasis on SLR would also fulfill the intent of House Bill 1512, which needs to be coordinated with this legislation.

In the agricultural sector, Hawai‘i has already experienced six years of drought, which has had a particularly serious negative impact on livestock. Thus, we believe that drought should also receive emphasis.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide this testimony in support of SB 2344.