UNIVERSITY OF HAWAIʻI SYSTEM
Legislative Testimony

Written Only Testimony
Submitted to the
House Committee on Agriculture
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And
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SB 434 SD2 – RELATED TO AGRICULTURE

Chair Tsuji, Vice Chair Onishi, and members of the House Committee on Agriculture, we respectfully submit testimony in support of SB 434 SD2, which updates the State's agricultural planning statute to add the growth and development of traditional Hawaiian farming systems and traditional Hawaiian crops, and the growth and development of small-scale farms, as agricultural objectives.

We fully support both inclusion of traditional crops and agricultural practices, and support for small farms in the economic objectives for the State of Hawaiʻi. The most recent (2012) census documents that 63% of the 7,000 farms in the State are less than 10 acres in size. These very small farms produce family food, vegetables and animal products for local sale and consumption, and such high-value crops as herbs and cut flowers. Further, 88% of our farms are less than 50 acres in size, and would still be considered small by many standards. These small and very small farms represent diversified agriculture in Hawaiʻi, and in large part are the agricultural clients served by the extension service of the College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources, University of Hawaiʻi at Mānoa.

Traditional crops such as taro and breadfruit are nutritious, culturally significant, and viewed as essential components of food security in Hawaiʻi; and are also now recognized as having great potential value for export as well (e.g., gluten-free breadfruit flour). Traditional agricultural practices are not only valuable means of crop production, but also serve to inform all agricultural development in the Hawaiian Islands.

Thank you for this opportunity to express the support of the University of Hawaiʻi for SB 434 SD2.