



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Commerce, Consumer Protection, and Health
and
Senate Committee on Ways and Means
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HB 144 HD1 SD1 – RELATING TO COFFEE LABELING

Chairs Baker and Dela Cruz, Vice Chairs Chang and Keith-Agaran, and members of the committees:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on House Bill 144 HD1 SD1. This measure directs the University of Hawai'i Economic Research Organization (UHERO) to conduct a study to assess the economic impact on the local coffee industry from potential changes to coffee labeling laws, and establishes a coffee labeling task force to review and assess the those findings, to develop proposed legislation to address the pertinent issues, and identify any related issues not addressed by state law.

UHERO is a very small research unit located within the College of Social Sciences at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. The four FTE faculty work very hard to achieve its mission to inform public and private sector decision-making through rigorous, independent economic research on the people, environment, and economy of Hawai'i.

The University of Hawai'i supports the need identified in this bill to quantify the economic costs and benefits of protecting Hawaii's Kona coffee brand and potential changes to Hawaii's coffee labeling laws. However, such important analysis is extremely complex and beyond the current capacity of UHERO, which does not have any agricultural economists, no expertise in marketing of agricultural products or intellectual property. We respectfully ask that UHERO be removed from the bill and that an entity with sufficient capacity and appropriate expertise be engaged for this important research.