



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

‘ŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAII

Legislative Testimony

Hō'ike Mana'o I Mua O Ka 'Aha'ōlelo

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Higher Education and Technology
Wednesday, February 8, 2023 at 2:15 p.m.

By

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And

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HB 694 – RELATING TO THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII

Chair Perruso, Vice Chair Kapela, and Members of the House Committee on Higher Education and Technology:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on HB 694 that appropriates funds to support the aquaculture disease diagnostic laboratory at the University of Hawai'i's College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (CTAHR), in partnership with the Hawai'i Department of Agriculture (HDOA).

We support the intent of this bill, however, we have concerns with the measure as written.

HDOA has a veterinary laboratory within the Division of Animal Industry (AI) that provides disease diagnostic laboratory support for livestock, poultry, and to some extent, aquacultured animals. CTAHR has built disease diagnostic laboratory capabilities for aquacultured animals but cannot provide services to the aquaculture industry with only project-supported personnel.

Based on HDOA's existing facility and HDOA and CTAHR's current capabilities for aquacultured animals, we believe the needs of the aquaculture industry would be best served by establishing an aquaculture disease diagnostic program within the existing HDOA AI Veterinary Laboratory that already provides disease diagnostic laboratory support for livestock, poultry, and to some extent, aquacultured animals. This laboratory should be administered by the HDOA, in consultation with CTAHR.

To ensure consistent, timely, and accurate testing services, we defer to HDOA whether a full-time laboratory technician (microbiologist position classification) and a full-time laboratory assistant position be created and housed in the HDOA AI Veterinary Laboratory to support the aquaculture disease diagnostic laboratory program. These technical positions would provide the skillset required to perform molecular diagnostic

testing. We also recommend that this position require proficiency in molecular diagnostics.

To ensure that the laboratory has up-to-date equipment and supplies to support the aquaculture industry, we recommend that sufficient funding be allocated to this laboratory for these purposes.

We support the intent of the bill; however, we cannot support the passage of this bill as written. And, provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities as indicated in our BOR Approved Budget. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure.