



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Finance
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SB 762 SD1 HD1 – RELATING TO AGRICULTURE EDUCATION

Chair Luke, Vice Chair Cullen and members of the House Committee on Finance:

Thank you for this opportunity to testify on SB 762 SD1 HD1 relating to agriculture education and establishes and appropriates funds for the P-20 agriculture education coordinator position within the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa (UHM), College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (CTAHR). This bill also outlines the duties of the coordinator and P-20 agriculture education working group. UHM/CTAHR supports with amendments the intent of this bill and we respectfully provide the following information to substantiate our position.

- Preschool through grade 20 (higher education) agriculture education is key to the development of future farmers and to a society that values and understands the vital role of agriculture, food, fiber, and natural resource systems in advancing personal, local, and global well-being and food security.
- UHM/CTAHR convened a working group under Senate Resolution 80 (2015) and developed a coordinated framework of support for preschool through post-secondary (P-20) agriculture education and a plan for implementation.
- The outcome of the working group was the consensus that a P-20 Agriculture Education Coordinator position is needed within UHM/CTAHR for the purpose of overseeing ongoing communication and collaboration of the P-20 Agriculture Education Working Group and spearheading the Implementation Plan that includes:
 - Teacher Development: Teacher training in agriculture and food systems education at all levels (P-20) for those preparing to become teachers ("pre-service teachers"), as well as additional professional development for those already in classrooms ("in-service teachers").

- Curricular Integration: Integrating agriculture education into the core curriculum in all subject areas at all levels (P-20).
- Agriculture Educators: Helping to establish and fund positions at the state, community, and school levels that directly support teacher development and curricular integration around agriculture and food systems.

The report highlights the large number of organizations working in this area. What is evident is the amount of overlap and lack of coordination between organizations. More effective effort on this topic could be had if there was some level of coordination among groups; and this position could also seek to provide that. We fully agree with, and support, the amendment that this position be required to provide an annual report to the legislature.

We support the intent of this bill. CTAHR is pleased to be the recipient of the position if that is the desire of the legislature. Our support is based on the condition the bill's passage be understood to be an addition to the budget priorities of the University of Hawai'i Board of Regents Approved Budget.

We also suggest two amendments to the budget based on the legislative intent:

Amendment 1: If the intent of the bill is to have this coordinator position for a period of two years, then the bill as written is appropriate. If the intent is for the position to be permanent, then it would be important to clarify that the P-20 agriculture education coordinator position is a permanent Administrative Professional Technical (APT) with UHM/CTAHR, and includes a position number.

Amendment 2: We suggest that an advisory group be formed from members of the P-20 resolution group that participated in the resolution, and that wrote the final report. The intent of the advisory group would be to provide oversight, suggestions, and evaluation of the programs developed by the coordinator.

Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony.