



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Finance
Thursday, March 28, 2019 at 3:00 p.m.

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SB 1148 SD2 – RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

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

Thank you for this opportunity to testify on SB 1148 SD2 relating to agriculture. The University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources supports this bill and we respectfully provide the following information to substantiate our position that was provided in testimony to SB 1148 SD1 with comment that reflects the positive changes made in this revision.

2018 was a difficult year for agriculture. Torrential rains hurt the taro and ornamental plant industries on Kaua'i and O'ahu. Volcanic eruption decimated approximately 50% of the papaya industry and severely hurt the orchid industry, while also having a negative effect on the bee industry. Multiple hurricanes compounded the problems as did frequent wildfires. Hawai'i needs to be prepared for the certain eventuality that this is a foreboding of disasters to come as our climate continues to change due to human influence.

Disaster relief generally follows a pattern: (1) search and rescue, (2) emergency relief, (3) early recovery, (4) medium to long-term recovery, and (5) community development. These steps pertain to agriculture with the exception of the first. Steps 2 and 3 need to happen as quickly as possible. This bill addresses step 3 - early recovery by providing grants and loans.

We support the changes made in the previous version and thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony. We also defer to the Department of Agriculture and their input on manpower and funding needs to accomplish the goal set by the legislature.