



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Ways and Means
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SB 1248 – RELATING TO AGRICULTURAL ENTERPRISES

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means:

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in strong support of the intent of SB 1248 relating to agricultural enterprises. Our first comment is to combine SB 1248 and SB 1025 which appear to be very similar. This testimony is comparable to that provided from HB 871.

Given the desire by the state government, state agencies, and University of Hawai'i at Mānoa (UHM), College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (CTAHR) to increase all aspects of agriculture for the benefit of the residents of Hawai'i, the Hawai'i Department of Agriculture (HDOA) requires the ability and authority that is outlined in this bill. UHM/CTAHR currently works closely with HDOA. We have developed a document that outlines the different responsibilities of HDOA and UHM/CTAHR, as well as where they overlap and collaborate. This document addresses language in this bill and is a good foundation for meeting this legislations intent.

SB 1248 gives HDOA the ability and authority to accomplish its basic mission to “conserve and protect agricultural lands, promote diversified agriculture, increase agricultural self-sufficiency and assure the availability of agriculturally suitable lands.”

UHM/CTAHR understands, through experience, that HDOA is critical to the agricultural future of the state of Hawai'i. It is tasked with diverse responsibilities and focuses on those responsibilities with limited human and monetary resources. SB 1248 and its intent are fundamental to HDOA's mission.

Given the state's current economic difficulties, SB 1248 will also be a mechanism for implementing the needed changes and management objectives with which HDOA is tasked.

Therefore, UH and CTAHR strongly supports the intent of this bill, but is aware of the current financial climate of the State of Hawai'i and realizes that state funding is reduced. UH defers to HDOA on their priorities.