



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

‘ŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAII

Legislative Testimony

Hō'ike Mana'o I Mua O Ka 'Aha'ōlelo

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Friday, March 1, 2024 at 9:55 a.m.

By

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And

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SB 2817 SD1 – RELATING TO THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII COLLEGE OF TROPICAL AGRICULTURE AND HUMAN RESOURCES

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on SB 2817 SD1 relating to the University of Hawai'i College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (CTAHR) which makes an appropriation to the University of Hawai'i to establish five full-time equivalent (5.0 APT FTE) faculty positions at CTAHR.

CTAHR strongly supports this bill and, we respectfully offer one suggested amendment. Specifically, this bill aims to help rectify significant gaps in the reach of Cooperative Extension programs due to vacancies that have surfaced in the past four years. We suggest the following amendment to SECTION 3 which designates one full-time equivalent extension agent in water quality and conservation in the county of Maui.

Specifically, this bill will provide:

SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the general revenues of the State of Hawai'i the sum of \$500,000 or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2024-2025 for CTAHR at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa to establish five full-time equivalent (5.0 FTE) positions, provided that the sums appropriated shall be expended as follows:

- (1) \$ for one full-time equivalent (1.0 FTE) extension specialist in water quality and conservation in the county of Maui;

SUGGESTED ADMENDMENT:

\$ for one full-time equivalent (1.0 FTE) extension agent in water quality and conservation in the county of Maui;

- (2) \$ for one full-time equivalent (1.0 FTE) extension agent in livestock in Hilo, county of Hawaii;

- (3) \$ for one full-time equivalent (1.0 FTE) state extension specialist in livestock at the University of Hawaii at Mānoa;
- (4) \$ for one full-time equivalent extension agent in urban horticulture and food systems in the city and county of Honolulu; and
- (5) \$ for one full-time equivalent (1.0 FTE) extension agent in health and community development in the county of Maui.

The sum appropriated shall be expended by the university of Hawai'i for the purposes of this Act.

CTAHR's Cooperative Extension relies on the knowledge and experience of county extension agents and extension specialists to extend research-based knowledge from the land-grant university out to the residents and agricultural producers of the state. That capability has been severely hampered by a string of resignations and retirements happening just prior to, and during, the COVID-19 pandemic. Agricultural producers from around the state have expressed how essential these noted positions are for the health and well-being of Hawai'i's agricultural producers and consumers.

We strongly support SB 2817 SD1 with the suggested amendment, provided its adoption does not impact priorities as indicated in our Board of Regents Approved Budget. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on the measure.