



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
Wednesday, March 12, 2025 at 2:00 p.m.

By

Parwinder Grewal, Dean
College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resilience
And

Michael Bruno, Provost
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

SB 865 SD1 – RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Chair Garrett, Vice Chair Amato, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of the intent of SB 865 SD1 relating to Agriculture that appropriates funds to establish a permanent Educational Support Associate position within the University of Hawai'i (UH) College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resilience's (CTAHR) Kona Cooperative Extension.

Coffee has emerged as an important cash crop for growers in Hawai'i. It has also become an important export commodity boosting Hawai'i's economy. CTAHR conducts research and provides research-based information to increase coffee production in the state and improve the economic viability of growers. Although coffee research plots exist at multiple CTAHR stations, CTAHR's Agricultural Research and Extension Station (CARES) in Kona currently has the sole Extension Agent engaged in applied research and outreach on coffee. Sustainability of coffee production is threatened by the Coffee Leaf Rust and Coffee Berry Borer and additional research and Extension capacity is needed to support the coffee industry throughout the state.

We strongly support the intent of this bill, and respectfully offer comments that it would be advantageous to have an Extension Agent position rather than an APT (Administrative, Professional and Technical) staff position that focuses on coffee, and other orchard crops with export potential such as macadamia nuts, cacao and tea to meet the needs of coffee and other orchard crops growers in the region and statewide.

We strongly support the intent of SB 865 SD1 with comments, provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities as indicated in our BOR Approved Budget.