



**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 Finance

April 1, 2025 at 2:00 p.m.

By

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And

Michael Bruno, Provost

University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa

SB 894 SD3 HD1 – RELATING TO EDUCATION

Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB 894 SD3 HD1 which appropriates funds to the Department of Education for regional kitchen expansion to fulfill the local farm-to-school meal goal requiring thirty per cent of the food served in public schools to consist of locally sourced products.

University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resilience (CTAHR) supports the efforts of the Department of Education (HiDOE) to fulfill the local farm-to-school meal goal mandated in Act 175, Session Laws of Hawai‘i 2021. The regional kitchens project has the potential to build a strong local food and agricultural ecosystem, increase Hawai‘i’s food self-sufficiency, and improve the nutritional health of our keiki. CTAHR has developed a new vision and an entrepreneurial and community-engaged operational model to build CTAHR’s Agricultural research and Extension Stations (CARES) centers as hubs of collaborative innovation and community prosperity and help farmers increase local food production and capture the regional kitchens markets on each island. CTAHR has developed distinct initiatives such as a Controlled Environment Agriculture Innovation Farm which will directly support the regional kitchens project to produce essential food commodities especially leafy greens throughout the year for local farm-to-school meals.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.