



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI'I SYSTEM

TESTIMONY

H.B.#1688, H.D. 1

MAKING AN APPROPRIATION TO THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI'I COLLEGE OF
TROPICAL AGRICULTURE AND HUMAN RESOURCES

Testimony Presented Before the
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

February 24, 2005

By

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Dean, College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources
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Testimony for
House Bill 1688, H.D. 1

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Dr. Andrew G. Hashimoto, Dean
College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources
University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa

I am pleased to contribute the expertise of the College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (CTAHR) to the decision-making process on House Bill 1688, H.D. 1, which appropriates funds to the University of Hawai‘i for (1) CTAHR research and outreach programs to develop and promote high-value agricultural products, breeding programs, and related activities and (2) organic agriculture programs within the UH system.

I will first address the benefits of funding CTAHR’s research and outreach programs. Hawai‘i agriculture and its value-added products contribute \$2.4 billion and more than 38,000 jobs to the state’s economy. Diversified agriculture—the production of crops other than sugarcane and pineapple—is an expanding economic sector that generates 70% of the state’s farm revenues and employs more than 70% of the state’s agricultural work force.

During the past decade, CTAHR’s work to advance Hawai‘i agriculture through research, instruction, and outreach has faced great financial challenges. Between 1995 and 2001, the base budget fell by \$3.5 million, and the college lost 36 faculty positions. The legislature helped remedy this situation by passing Act 234, Session Laws of Hawai‘i 2001, which appropriated \$500,000 for each year of the 2001–2003 biennium.

CTAHR used the Act 234 funds to hire nine faculty members in three key areas:

- high-value agricultural products and breeding
- agricultural biotechnology
- environmentally sound agricultural management practices

Act 234 contained language to add the appropriation to the UH base budget. However, budgetary restrictions prevented the university from rolling these funds into the 2003–2005 budget. As a result, the college had fewer resources to meet growing demand for its

services: between 2003 and 2004, CTAHR's budget declined by 3%, while student enrollment grew by 11%. In 2004, the legislature addressed this shortfall by passing Act 223, which appropriated \$500,000 for CTAHR research programs in fiscal year 2005, again providing that the funds be added to the UH base budget. HB1688, HD1 requests an appropriation for the 2005–2007 biennium to continue funding the nine faculty members hired with the money made available by Act 234, SLH 2001.

The faculty hired with Act 234 funds serve farmers, horticulturists, and landscapers on Hawai'i and Maui, teach undergraduate and graduate students at the Mānoa campus, and engage in field and laboratory research to

- address the pest, disease, and nutrition issues faced by Hawai'i growers
- introduce new products to the Hawai'i market
- promote Hawai'i products in the state, on the mainland, and abroad
- create innovative technologies and develop new value-added goods
- investigate how management of Hawai'i's forests and watersheds can support profitable industries, protect sensitive land and coastal resources, and help recharge our aquifers.

Adding \$500,000 to the UH base budget to support these vital faculty positions is an investment that will pay rich dividends far into Hawai'i's future.

HB1688, HD1 also appropriates funds to support organic agriculture programs within the UH system, such as the Wai'anae Organic Agriculture Center at Leeward Community College. Such programs will benefit both farmers and consumers. Organic agriculture is one of the fastest growing segments of U.S. agriculture. According to USDA statistics, during the past decade organic acreage in the United States has doubled and consumption of organically produced products has increased 20 percent per year. Consumer demand in Hawai'i is growing for high-quality, fresh organic produce. Research and outreach to support the growth of organic agriculture in Hawai'i can create new jobs in the state's growing diversified agriculture industry, promote improved crop production, develop new products and markets, improve food security, conserve working rural areas, contribute to clean, resource-efficient, and sustainable farm practices, and help build and nurture alliances among farmers, the higher education sector, and the community.

I support HB1688, HD1 provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities as indicated in our Executive Biennium Budget.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.