



# UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI'I SYSTEM

## TESTIMONY

H.B. 563 RELATING TO MICROORGANISM IMPORT

Testimony Presented Before the  
House Committee on Judiciary

January 26, 2006

By

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Interim Vice President for Research  
University of Hawaii

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Re: HB 563 RELATING TO MICROORGANISM IMPORT

The purpose of the bill is to repeal provisions for microorganism import certification for medical or scientific purposes. The University opposes this bill in its current form because the importation of microorganisms has been cited by our faculty as one of the primary obstacles in conducting cutting edge microbial and medical research.

Last session the DOA testified that “the certification program is unnecessary and impractical, and lacks funding”. In fact, the current importation permit process is outdated and very time consuming and the development of a Microorganism Import Certification Program would be of great service to the research community.

In order to stay active in today’s research environment, with decreased federal funding and increasing competition from universities and industry, our researchers need to be able to move quickly to respond to new advances in their science, and the expeditious importation of microorganisms plays a vital role in that effort. Moreover, as the state moves to develop its own biotechnology industry, where the graduates of our university can work at living wage jobs and raise their families in Hawaii, we need to create efficiencies between government, industry and the university.

The university proposes and supports the following amendments to HB 563. We believe that given the proper resources, the DOA can become a partner instead of an obstacle in our ongoing research efforts.

- Obligate the DOA to institute the Import Certification Program w/in one year.
- Provide DOA w/ 1 full-time, G-funded position dedicated to establishing the program and upgrading the permit and permit tracking system.
- Provide \$250k to establish a computer/web-based solution for issuing and tracking permits and material allowed in to the state.

We believe the above amendments will help alleviate the importation bottleneck and facilitate the movement of research materials that are so vital to the success for our research enterprise.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.