



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

TESTIMONY

HB 3177 MAKING AN APPROPRIATION FOR THE
UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII AT HILO
NORTH HAWAII EDUCATION RESEARCH CENTER

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Higher Education

February 4, 2006

by

Rose Y. Tseng
Chancellor
University of Hawai'i at Hilo

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Chair Waters and Members of the Committee:

The University of Hawai'i at Hilo strongly supports HB 3177. The purpose of this bill is to facilitate the development of the North Hawai'i Education and Research Center (NHERC).

NHERC was created by Act 177, SLH 2002 that provided \$1.7 million in construction funds for Phase 1. UH Hilo anticipates the completion of Phase 1 this month. In addition, the University received the funds enabling the construction of Phase 2, as authorized by Act 200, SLH 2003 and amended by Act 41, SLH 2004. The University also obtained funding for three staff positions for NHERC as part of the state budget for the fiscal biennium 2005-2007.

UH Hilo is seeking further legislative support to continue to increase access to higher education in North Hawai'i. NHERC is a collaborative development between the University of Hawai'i at Hilo, Hawai'i Community College, area high schools, and the communities of North Hawai'i. The University has worked closely with the communities of North Hawai'i for the past four years to develop credit and non-credit programs to serve college students, advanced placement high school students, and adult learners. In-service training courses for educational and career advancement have also been offered.

HB 3177 permits the University to continue to nurture the collaborative vision that is NHERC. More specifically, HB 3177 provides for the computers and the furnishing of the classrooms, the computer lab and the distance learning classroom created by Phase 1. NHERC will utilize internet technology for transmission of courses. This technology will allow students to participate in courses at any time of the day without leaving their homes. Students who are unable to participate in online courses due to no high speed internet connection will be able to travel to NHERC to utilize the computers in the center to participate in online courses.

HB 3177 also aids the University in the economic recovery plan for North Hawai'i.

We support this bill provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities as indicated in our BOR Approved Executive Supplemental Budget.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this measure.