



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented before the
House Committee on Energy and Environmental Protection

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by
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HB 644, Relating to a Bioenergy Master Plan

Chair Morita, Vice Chair Carroll, and Members of the Committee:

I am pleased to provide testimony on House Bill 644, which establishes a bioenergy master plan task force to develop and implement policies and procedures for a bioenergy industry in Hawai'i and makes appropriations.

The University supports HB 644.

Hawai'i must move toward a more sustainable energy future. Ninety percent of the energy we use comes from imported fossil fuels. The percentage of our energy derived from petroleum is the highest of the 50 states, and our gasoline prices and electricity rates are among the highest in the nation. Our reliance on oil makes us acutely vulnerable to price spikes and sudden disruptions in supply.

The development of a bioenergy industry in Hawai'i holds great promise. Our state currently has about 100,000 acres of former sugarcane and pineapple land lying fallow. By growing fuel crops we can conserve these important agricultural lands while lessening our dependence on oil, conserving green, open space, and creating a more sustainable future.

The challenges involved in launching a bioenergy industry are complex and will require the collaboration of many public and private stakeholders with diverse interests and expertise. The temporary bioenergy master plan task force established by HB 644 will bring these stakeholder groups together to formulate the resource, technology, and policy approaches required to develop a viable bioenergy industry in Hawai'i. CTAHR would be pleased to participate on the task force should the bill be enacted.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.