



# UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

## Legislative Testimony

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Written Testimony Presented Before the  
House Committee on Finance  
February 20, 2008 at 4:30 pm  
by  
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and  
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### HB 2510, HD1 – RELATING TO THE ENVIRONMENT

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. Unfortunately, the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa can only support the intent of the bill at this time because of our pressing priorities, such as our tremendous need for repairs and maintenance and health and safety issues, which are critical to our ability to perform our core mission for the State of Hawai'i. We are grateful to the Legislature's attention to these needs. We recognize that you have many priorities and issues to weigh for the state, so the following substantive information on this program is provided to assist you in your decision-making process.

Having an appropriate environmental review system is clearly a critically important effort for the entire State of Hawaii. Act 294, Session Laws of Hawai'i 2006 appropriated funds to the University of Hawai'i environmental center to perform a comprehensive review of the State's current environmental impact statement process under chapter 343, Hawai'i Revised Statutes. The commenced study had to be terminated due to a premature lapse of appropriated funds.

The impetus for this bill is to conduct a review of the environmental process, look at best practices in other places, and modernize the review process in light of changes that have occurred since Chapter 343 was adopted.

Many faculty at the University of Hawai'i have been deeply involved in the environmental impact assessment system for many years as reviewers or participants in the process. It complements the University's research and activities on environmental management, sustainable development, climate change and hazard mitigation, and other topics involving the balancing of the environment and economy.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify, we appreciate all interest in the University, and want to emphasize that we will be able to perform better in all arenas and best serve the state with support of the current campus priorities approved by the Board of Regents.