



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Economic Revitalization, Business, & Military Affairs Committee
February 17, 2009 at 8:30 a.m.

by
James R. Gaines
Vice President for Research, University of Hawai'i

HB610: RELATING TO SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

The University of Hawaii opposes HB610

The University of Hawaii (UH) supports the intent of this bill, to establish a task force to develop the Hawaii state Science and Technology Plan (STP), however this bill would duplicate efforts already underway.

UH has taken the initiative to fast track a statewide STP because of the requirements of the National Science Foundation's Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCoR), of which Hawaii is a recipient. From the most recent EPSCoR proposal solicitation the requirement for a STP is clear:

“Essential to EPSCoR’s goal of enhancing the competitive position of jurisdictions’ research and research-based education in science and engineering is a well-designed State-wide Science and Technology initiative or plan (S&T Plan). This S&T Plan establishes state-wide goals and objectives, and provides a framework that guides the jurisdiction’s utilization of resources from EPSCoR and other stakeholders to achieve them. Each jurisdiction must establish and utilize an EPSCoR governing committee that works closely with leaders in academe, government, and the private sector. The committee will identify potential R&D improvement strategies and activities that are consistent with the S&T plan and most likely to advance the further development of a nationally competitive academic R&D capability. Once in place, this academic R&D capability is expected to provide a key ingredient for a definitive innovation and commercialization strategy to stimulate the jurisdiction’s economic development, including a diverse well-prepared STEM enabled workforce.” (From NSF EPSCoR Research Infrastructure Improvement Program Solicitation, NSF 08-587)

An external EPSCoR Monitoring and Assessment Panel conducted a review of the Hawai'i EPSCoR Project in March 2008 and concluded that it would take an active intervention for Hawaii EPSCoR to be in substantial compliance with the expectations of the NSF and the requirement for Hawai'i to develop a statewide STP. Therefore, in the fall of 2008, the co-Chairs of the Statewide EPSCoR Committee established a special subcommittee to draft a Hawai'i State STP for review by the full statewide committee prior to submission to both the Governor and Legislature no later than November 2009.

Through the NSF EPSCoR program, Hawaii has received over \$35M in direct and co-funded support since 2001. The majority of these funds were competitively awarded to the University of

Hawaii however several awards were made to private companies and non-profits (i.e Bishop Museum). Currently the UH has 2 EPSCoR proposals under consideration by the NSF; A Research Infrastructure Improvement proposal for \$4M/y for 5 years (\$20M) and a \$2M/y for 3 year (\$3M to Hawaii) Cyberinfrastructure partnership proposal with the University of Alaska.

In addition, Following the release of the Hawaii Science & Technology Council's report, INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY IN HAWAII: An Economic and Workforce Profile ([http://www.hiscitech.org/ data/n_0001/resources/live/Innovation+Tech+Hawaii+Report+Sept30 .pdf](http://www.hiscitech.org/data/n_0001/resources/live/Innovation+Tech+Hawaii+Report+Sept30.pdf)), in October 2008, UH also convened a stakeholder group to address the first recommendation of that work, to "develop and implement a strategic plan, then monitor progress in achieving greater development of technology and innovation in the state, in collaboration with private- and public-sector stakeholders." This group, working across a number of science and technology sectors in Hawaii, is soliciting funding from external agencies to develop a detailed STP for the state. However because federal funding sources have been in transition since this group was convened, it is also working in parallel with the EPSCoR effort and will pursue new funding opportunities that are becoming available under the new administration in Washington..

The UH respectfully asks that this bill be deferred until the present efforts can present the results of their work to the legislature towards the end of 2009.