



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented before the
House Committee on Agriculture
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by

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and

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HB 1434 – RELATING TO EDUCATION

Chair Tsuji and Vice Chair Wooley, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Andrew Hashimoto, and I serve as Dean and Director of the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (CTAHR).

The purpose of HB 1434 is to direct the University of Hawaii, CTAHR, in cooperation with the Department of Agriculture (DOA) and the Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation (HFBF), to study the feasibility of establishing a farm to school program in Hawai'i's public schools and to submit a report to the 2010 Legislature.

We note that the Department of Education (DOE), whose school lunch program, procurement practices and educational curriculum may be impacted by participation in a statewide farm to school program, is not named as a party to the study. It is important that the DOE is a part of the study since it is clear that whatever is conceived must meet the federal lunch program criteria.

UHM and CTAHR support the intent of this bill, as it will promote local agriculture, the farming community, and the use of safe, fresh, high-quality, locally-grown produce. The bill is also in keeping with the State's initiative to increase Hawai'i's food self-sufficiency from the current reality of importing 85% of all food we consume, and relates to CTAHR's vision to actively help Hawai'i diversify its economy, ensure a sustainable environment, and strengthen its communities.

However, this support is expressed on the condition that it does not adversely affect our UH priorities as set in our budget request, most notably in health and safety and repairs and maintenance issues. Addressing these urgent needs is critical to our ability to perform our core mission for the State of Hawai'i.

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.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.