



# UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

## Legislative Testimony

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Testimony Presented Before the  
House Committee on Finance  
Wednesday, March 3, 2009 at 6:30 p.m.

by

Virginia S. Hinshaw, Chancellor

and

Andrew G. Hashimoto, Dean and Director  
College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources  
University of Hawaii at Manoa

HB 1471, HD1 – RELATING TO FARMS

Chair Oshiro, Vice Chair Lee, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Andrew Hashimoto, and I serve as Dean and Director of the University of Hawaii at Mānoa College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (CTAHR). I am pleased to provide testimony on behalf of Virginia Hinshaw, Chancellor of the University of Hawaii at Manoa (UHM).

The purpose of HB 1471, HD1 is to establish a pilot program within the Department of Agriculture to develop safe food certification for farms that form agricultural cooperatives and establish purchasing agreements with hotels and restaurants. The bill establishes the Food Certification Pilot Program Special Fund and appropriates \$160,000 in general revenues in fiscal years 2009-2010 and 2010-2011, as necessary, for the operation of a food certification pilot program.

We support of the intent of the bill, which is to support the local agricultural community and promote safe, fresh, high-quality, locally-grown produce, as long as the appropriation does not negatively affect the Department of Agriculture's budget. Safety of the food we consume and the health of our citizens and visitors are of utmost importance not only for our personal well-being, but to our State's economy and image as a safe, tropical destination in which to live and visit.

The Departments of Agriculture (DOA) and Health (DOH) have been good stewards in overseeing the safety of food in the islands. The DOA conducts third party food safety audits to certify farms under both USDA and Primus standards. In addition, the DOA implemented a pilot food traceability program using radio frequency identification (RFID) technology, among other food safety initiatives. Additional funding for the pilot program will support and help to expand food safety programs and education for farmers, and explore and promote markets for local produce.

CTAHR conducts an on-going, on-farm food safety coaching program which provides training to those working on farms, greenhouses, packing houses, and processing facilities to help them address issues found in audits conducted by the DOA.

Furthermore, the bill is in keeping with the State's initiative to increase Hawaii's food self-sufficiency from the current reality of importing to Hawaii upwards of 85% of all food we consume, and relates to CTAHR's vision to actively help Hawaii diversify its economy, ensure a sustainable environment, and strengthen its communities.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this measure.