



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

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by

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HB 1546, HD1 – RELATING TO THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII

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

The University of Hawaii greatly appreciates the Legislature's interest in funding Construction and Equipment for a new Information Technology building to serve and protect the entire University of Hawaii System. This project is the highest priority request for general obligation bonds for new construction in the University of Hawaii Board of Regents 2009-2011 biennium budget. However, the University requests that this project be funded through the CIP budget as proposed by the Board of Regents rather than through the more complex mechanism described in this measure.

Information technologies have become essential infrastructure for almost everything that goes on throughout the University of Hawaii System. Yet the University has never constructed appropriate facilities to house the infrastructure on which tens of thousands depend at our campuses and education centers on six islands.

As the Hawaii State Auditor noted in Report 05-15 in December, 2005: "The university's computing center is located in a building unsuited for housing information technology equipment. The structure was initially designed for classrooms and, as such, does not have the physicalities needed to protect the computing center. For example, because the computing center is located on the ground floor of the building, it is vulnerable to flooding."

While located at UH-Manoa, the proposed building will serve the entire UH System. It will be the first and only facility designed and constructed anywhere in the UH System to properly house the information technology systems and services that serve at the core of teaching, administration and research for all ten campuses and all students throughout the State of Hawaii.

Systems and services at risk through their reliance on the current facilities include:

- Internet access for all UH campuses and Hawaii State Government, including the Legislature
- Online learning for all students of all UH campuses

- Video-based distance learning among all UH locations on all islands
- Student information, financial aid, registration, financial management and human resources systems for all 10 UH campuses and all students on all islands
- Email for all UH students, faculty and staff
- Web sites for the UH system, UH-Manoa and many campuses
- Telephone service for the UH-Manoa campus, dormitories and system offices

The project has been under consideration for decades, but until recently has not had a consistently high priority within the University. Recurring IT outages over the past several years, coupled with increasing energy costs and the need for renovation throughout the University have made it clear that construction of a new facility is essential.

All Planning and Design funds (\$4.7m) have been appropriated and released. Design is well underway and is scheduled for completion this year. An estimated \$50.6m is required for Construction and \$5.6m for equipment. In recognition of the importance of the project, in the 2009-2011 biennium the University has requested half the required funds in general obligation bonds and half in revenue bonds that will be repaid with University resources. If funds are appropriated this session, construction will begin in 2010 and the building will be ready for occupancy in 2011.

In addition to providing desperately needed protection of critical information and communication resources for the University and State of Hawaii, the project will be an enormous boost to UH's sustainability posture and significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions. It will enable a substantial reduction in energy usage by moving massively power-consuming and heat-generating enterprise IT systems that are currently scattered across inappropriate spaces on campus into UH's first properly designed data center. The new facility will be the first LEED-certified data center in Hawaii and the first LEED-certified building on the UH-Manoa central campus. It will also have space for consolidated support of the many servers scattered throughout university schools and colleges, which will enable energy saving in many other UH buildings.

Another important benefit will be the establishment of UH's first Emergency Situation Room, which will provide space with highly available power and communications suitable for management of disasters and crises. It will improve efficiency and cost-effectiveness of IT operations and support for the entire UH system, and free up campus "surge" space to support ongoing facility renovations and upgrades at UH-Manoa.

UH has also agreed to use this facility to support real-time backup data storage for the State of Hawaii until such time as DAGS/ICSD can construct its own backup data center.

UH greatly appreciates the support of the Legislature for this building. The appropriation of Planning and Design funds has positioned the project with strong potential to stimulate the economy while creating critical infrastructure for the University and State of Hawaii. We therefore request support for Construction and Equipment funds for this project as requested by the Board of Regents in the CIP budget rather than through this measure.