



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Agriculture/Higher Education
Wednesday, March 23, 2011 at 10:00am

By

Virginia Hinshaw, Chancellor

and

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HR 77/HCR 84 Requesting the Department of Agriculture, in cooperation with the University of Hawai'i College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources, to convene a working group to evaluate the current laws, rules, and standards of practice regarding high risk plants requiring intervention.

Chair Tsuji and Nishimoto, and members of the Committees on Agriculture and Higher Education: thank you for the opportunity to testify on HR 77/HCR 84, which requests the Department of Agriculture, in cooperation with the University of Hawai'i College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources, to convene a working group to evaluate the current laws, rules, and standards of practice regarding high risk plants requiring intervention. I am Sylvia Yuen, Interim Dean and Director of the College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (CTAHR) at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa.

While we agree with the intent of HR 77/HCR 84, there are several areas of concern in the resolution. First, although the Department of Agriculture (DOA) is tasked with convening the working group that will carry out the charges in the resolution, the DOA is not specifically identified to serve as a member of the working group. Second, although the resolution recognizes that invasive plants are a threat to Hawai'i's horticultural, aquacultural, and livestock industries, those groups and other relevant entities are not represented on the working group. And third, some of the tasks identified in the resolution may be duplicative or may be better performed by a committee presently established by the DOA. However, the DOA is in a better position to determine whether the responsibilities, membership, and activities of the aforementioned committee would be appropriate to the tasks delineated in HR 77/HCR 84.

For the reasons cited above, we cannot support these resolutions as currently written.