



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI'I SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the

House Committee on Finance
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By

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And

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HCR 153/HR 115 – CONVENING A MANOA ROAD TASK FORCE TO DISCUSS OWNERSHIP, MAINTENANCE, AND REPAIR RESPONSIBILITY OF THE PORTION OF MANOA ROAD LEADING UP TO THE LYON ARBORETUM.

Chair Oshiro, Vice Chair Lee and members of the Finance Committee, thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony expressing our support for HCR 153 and HR 115, which calls for convening a Mānoa Road Task Force to discuss ownership, maintenance and repair responsibility for the portion of Mānoa Road leading up to the Lyon Arboretum.

Although these resolutions address several issues with Mānoa Road, including ownership and vegetation management, our immediate concern relates to the portion of Mānoa Road that extends from the entrance to the old Paradise Park to the entrance to Lyon Arboretum. This road is badly deteriorated and poses a major safety concern for motorists and the many pedestrians in the area. The fact that this roadway is very heavily utilized adds to the compelling need to resolve its ownership, maintenance and repair responsibility.

Nearly 50,000 persons visit the Lyon Arboretum each year, many of whom are schoolchildren who learn valuable lessons at our 200-acre facility about the care of the 'āina and conservation of endangered native plants. We also host popular public tours and volunteer activities at the Arboretum. All programs, and community access, are at risk if participants cannot access the Lyon Arboretum on a safe roadway.

This road is also the access point to the popular Stated-owned Mānoa Falls trail – creating very heavy pedestrian use of the narrow road by recreational hikers, visiting tourists, and school groups. In addition, there is frequent use of the road by City emergency vehicles on the many occasions when assistance is needed by hikers in distress and by large school buses transporting students to the Arboretum. The mix of many pedestrians and drivers maneuvering on the pothole-riddled road, along with encroaching vegetation, creates safety concerns.

The University of Hawai'i at Mānoa has discussed this issue with the Honolulu Mayor, Governor's office, and area legislators at the State and City levels. While there is agreement on the need to determine a responsible entity, there is no unanimous agreement on identifying that entity. For these reasons, we strongly support the need for a multi-level task force to consider permanent solutions to resolve this issue, including legislation if necessary.