



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Written Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Education
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By

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Dean

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HB 1988 – RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Chair Takumi, Vice Chair Ohno, and members of the House Committee on Education, thank you for this opportunity to provide my comments in support HB 1988, which establishes the Hawai'i Farm to School Program and Farm to School Coordinator position within the Department of Agriculture.

I am in strong support of the first purpose of this program, which is to increase the use of locally-grown food in state agencies, and to fund a farm-to-school coordinator in the Department of Agriculture for this purpose. The farm-to-school coordinator should act as a liaison with other state agencies, including the Department of Agriculture and the University of Hawai'i, to develop plans to increase the use of locally-grown foods within state agencies.

However, I do not believe that the second responsibility stated in HB 1988 of “coordinating agricultural education in schools throughout the state from preschool through high school and at the university level” is within the purview of the Department of Agriculture or the farm-to-school coordinator of this proposed program. Thus, I respectfully request deletion of this second program responsibility from HB 1988.

The Department of Education and the University of Hawai'i are charged with providing education to Hawai'i's citizens, under the general guidelines and systematic review of national accrediting bodies. It would not be productive for other state agencies to be tasked with coordinating these education programs, although we welcome interagency partnerships to support our agriculture education programs, which are often severely under-funded.

Thank you again for this opportunity to express the conditional support of the College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, for HB 1988, with our request that responsibility for coordinating agricultural education be removed from the bill.