

Statement of

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before the
SENATE COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

February 17, 2004
State Capitol, Conference Room 229, 2:30 pm

in consideration of

SB 2495 SD1

RELATING TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Chair Fukunaga, Vice Chair Aduja, and members of the committee.

The University of Hawaii (UH) John A. Burns School of Medicine (JABSOM) supports this measure, which authorizes the issuance of general obligation bonds and makes an appropriation for the purpose of constructing wet lab space and high technology related facilities such as biotech incubator at Kaka'ako for biotech-related research.

Hawaii has invested \$150 million for a bioscience research park at Kaka'ako with the JABSOM relocating its education and administration into one building (138,000 gsq ft.) and a science building (216,000 gsq ft.) that will accommodate some of the basic research of the medical school. The medical school could lead the biotechnology effort for Hawaii as done in other states like San Diego, the San Francisco Bay Area, Seattle, Boston, Baltimore, New York City, and the Research Triangle Park in North Carolina. All of these biotechnology sites have developed around areas where medical discoveries are being made—mainly at research medical schools and biomedical research institutes. Through the medical school's research, it would become the focal point of a new bioscience initiative in Hawaii. The academic environment is the nurturing place for the biotechnology industry.

Two things are lacking to have a robust biotech industry in Hawaii—the workforce and research space, particularly wet lab space and a biotech incubator. The medical school can work with the high schools and community colleges to train the work force. The state and the private sector need to build the research space. SB 2495 SD1 could facilitate the construction of additional research buildings, with leasable research space, that would be clustered around the core medical school. Leasable research space is critical to Hawaii's effort to support a new biotech industry. Small companies that will grow from the discoveries made at the medical school and private research will be housed in this space.

In closing, I support SB 2495 SD1 as it would facilitate the creation of a new economic cluster by developing and attracting new R&D companies and supporting existing biotech companies through the development of needed research space in Kaka'ako.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.