



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented before the
Senate Committee on Education
Senate Committee on Water, Land, Agriculture, and Hawaiian Affairs
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by
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SB 90, Relating to Vocational Agriculture and Landscape Education

Chair Sakamoto, Chair Kokubun, Vice Chair Tokuda, and Members of the Committees:

The purpose of SB 90 is to establish a Vocational Agriculture and Landscape Education Program to ensure the continued supply of qualified individuals to support and maintain the agriculture and landscape industries. The University supports SB 90.

To expand and thrive, Hawai'i's agricultural and landscape industries need qualified workers across a range of skill levels. The gross sales of landscape providers and the cost of in-house landscaping services were conservatively estimated at \$490 million in 2002. The landscape industry employs more than 10,000 individuals and is adding about 130 jobs per year. Diversified agriculture is also growing, reaching a record value of \$438 million in 2005. These green industries support and complement the hospitality industry by creating beautiful destinations and recreational facilities and by conserving the green, open countryside that visitors to Hawai'i value.

An agriculture and landscape education program will support the growth of these industries by involving young people in the challenges and rewards of cultivating the land. The program will also help the University engage students, including those who might not otherwise pursue post-secondary education, to continue their agriculture and landscape studies at the college level, for example, in the agricultural sciences, in agribusiness, or in a landscape architecture program currently being developed at UH Mānoa. Many jobs available in the agricultural and landscape industries demand complex knowledge in diverse fields of expertise. By increasing educational opportunities at the secondary and post-secondary levels, this program will greatly benefit those industries.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.