



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented before the
Senate Committee on Energy and Environment
Senate Committee on Commerce, Consumer Protection, and Affordable Housing

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by
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SB 982, Relating to a Bioenergy Master Plan

Chair Menor, Vice Chair Hooser, Chair Taniguchi, Vice Chair Ige, and Members of the Committees:

The purpose of Senate Bill 982 is to establish a bioenergy master plan task force to develop and implement policies and procedures for a bioenergy industry in Hawai'i, and to make appropriations.

The University supports SB 982.

Hawai'i must move toward a more sustainable energy future. Ninety percent of the energy we use comes from imported fossil fuels. The percentage of our energy derived from petroleum is the highest of the 50 states, and our gasoline prices and electricity rates are among the highest in the nation. Our reliance on oil makes us acutely vulnerable to price spikes and sudden disruptions in supply.

The development of a bioenergy industry in Hawai'i holds great promise. Our state currently has about 100,000 acres of former sugarcane and pineapple land lying fallow. By growing fuel crops we can conserve these important agricultural lands while lessening our dependence on oil, conserving green, open space, and creating a more sustainable future.

The challenges involved in launching a bioenergy industry are complex and will require the collaboration of many public and private stakeholders with diverse interests and expertise. The temporary bioenergy master plan task force established by SB 982 will bring these stakeholder groups together to formulate the resource, technology, and policy approaches required to develop a viable bioenergy industry in Hawai'i. CTAHR would be pleased to participate on the task force should the bill be enacted.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.