



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented before the
Senate Committee on Water, Land, Agriculture, and Hawaiian Affairs
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by
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SB 1943, SD1, Relating to Energy

Chair Kokubun, Vice Chair Tokuda, and Members of the Committee:

The purpose of SB 1943, SD1 is to allow biofuel processing facilities to be a permitted use in an agriculture district and to establish an energy feedstock program to develop a baseline percentage of energy feedstock to be grown in the State.

The University supports SB 1943, SD1.

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. By growing fuel crops we can bring fallow agricultural lands back into production while lessening our dependence on oil, conserving green, open space, and creating a more sustainable future.

By allowing biofuel processing on agricultural lands, provided the processing facilities are compatible with other agricultural uses, SB 1943, SD1 supports the development of a biofuels industry in our state. By establishing within the Hawai'i Department of Agriculture an energy feedstock program, SB 1943, SD1 will encourage local production of energy feedstock and establish a baseline percentage of energy feedstock to be grown locally to meet state energy requirements, helping us meet mandates for use of alternative energy sources.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.