

UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI‘I SYSTEM LEGISLATIVE TESTIMONY



**SB 2897 Making Appropriations and Authorizing the Issuance of
General Obligation Bonds and Revenue Bonds for
Coconut Island Improvements**

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Education

February 6, 2008 at 1:15 p.m.

by
Virginia S. Hinshaw, Chancellor
Presented by
Brian Taylor, Dean
School of Ocean & Earth Science & Technology
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

**Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Education**

Wednesday, February 6, 2008
1:15 p.m.
Conference Room 225

By
Virginia S. Hinshaw, Chancellor
Presented by
Brian Taylor, Dean
School of Ocean & Earth Science & Technology
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

**SB 2897 Making Appropriations and Authorizing the Issuance of General
Obligation Bonds and Revenue Bonds for Coconut Island Improvements**

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

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. The University supports SB2897 and requests that \$57 million be inserted in line 4 on page 3 as the amount to be appropriated and authorized to be funded by revenue bonds for the purposes described in Part II, Section 2B of the bill. The Hawai'i Institute of Marine Biology resides on MokuoLo'e (referred to as Coconut Island) in Kaneohe Bay and this unique research facility is an important resource for the University of Hawai'i and for the state of Hawai'i. We are requesting this support in order to pursue opportunities to enhance and protect this resource.

At a time when global reefs are experiencing increased threats from climate change and ocean acidification, the faculty and students at the Hawai'i Institute of Marine Biology are able to study these threats within 30 feet of a living coral reef. Moreover, HIMB hosts more than 7,500 students and visitors of all ages per year, making it one of the most "hands-on" learning laboratories in the University of Hawai'i System. However, the facilities at HIMB are in need of renovation. The seven year old Edwin Pauley Marine Laboratory does provide a modern functional genomics facility and modern laboratories. It, however, has the unique distinction of being the most energy inefficient building at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa. The old Edwin Pauley Marine Laboratory built in 1965 facing the ocean is showing serious signs of wear, with spalling concrete and rusting steel support girders. Structural engineers have reported that this building must be renovated soon or it will no longer be salvageable. The estimated cost for the renovation is \$26 million.

In addition, when the island and the new Pauley Marine Laboratory was donated to the University of Hawai'i, a Master Plan for Coconut Island was commissioned and developed. This plan called for replacement docks and piers, fire and shoreline protection, and new laboratory facilities and a meeting center. The estimated costs to partially realize this plan include \$10 million for shoreline protection, replacement piers and docks, and \$21 million for the new lab building. The University of Hawai'i supports the promise made to the Edwin Pauley Foundation, whose \$10 million in donations are second only to the recent Shidler gift, to enhance and fulfill the opportunities for research and education at Coconut Island.

In addition, while the bill provides for general obligation bond funds for work described in Part II, Section 2A, which is necessary in order to obtain permits to proceed with the projects discussed above, we have determined that this work can be done through other funds. Accordingly, we are requesting no general obligation bond funds. However, in order to preserve the legal validity of the bill since the title of the measure includes general obligation bonds, we are recommending the insertion of \$1 each for the amounts in lines 6 and 17 on page 2.

Finally, as a technical amendment, we recommend revising line 9 on page 3 of the bill to read: "appropriation funded by general obligation bonds unencumbered as of June 30, 2020, shall lapse as" (recommended revision underlined).

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this measure.