



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Written Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Higher Education
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by

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SB 2039 – MAKING AN APPROPRIATION FOR THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII COLLEGE OF TROPICAL AGRICULTURE AND HUMAN RESOURCES COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE

Chair Choy, Vice Chair Ichiyama, and members of the House Committee on Higher Education, thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of SB 2039, which appropriates funds to the University of Hawai'i, CTAHR, for its cooperative extension service to improve education regarding agricultural science and food safety.

We strongly support this bill provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities as indicated in the University's Board of Regents Approved Executive Biennium Budget.

The Legislature and the people of Hawai'i have an increasing sense of urgency with respect to food security. This includes a need for accelerated training to assist new farmers, with an emphasis on farming practices that may Hawai'i's need for imported and expensive farming inputs; and a concomitant need to ensure that appropriate good agriculture practices are followed and safe food reaches our plates. In order to reduce our reliance on imported food, and ensure that farming in Hawai'i remains a viable occupation in the face of both increased input costs and increased costs associated with farm food safety regulation, while also ensuring that Hawai'i's agricultural products are safe to consume and of high quality requires a two-prong approach on the part of the Cooperative Extension Service: our farmers need to be well-trained in both farm production and in practices that will ensure the safety of the food they produce without increasing production costs unreasonably.

As is stated in Committee Report SSCR2093, SB 2039 will support the Cooperative Extension Service's efforts to provide important educational and informational resources regarding agricultural sciences and food safety while UH CTAHR explores additional, long-term sources of funding. An amount of \$520,000 would fund the following positions:

- (1) One full-time (1.0 FTE) livestock agent in Maui County;
- (2) One full-time (1.0 FTE) food crops agent in City and County of Honolulu;
- (3) One full-time (1.0 FTE) sustainable agricultural agent in Hawaii County; and
- (4) One full-time (1.0 FTE) sustainable agricultural agent in Kauai County.

We agree with the request made in SSCR2093 that these funds be allowed to lapse in two years, rather than one.

Thank you again for the opportunity to express our support for SB 2039.