



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Written Comments to the
Senate Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection
and
Senate Committee on Judiciary and Labor
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by
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SB 2175 SD1 – RELATING TO INDUSTRIAL HEMP

Chairs Baker and Hee, Vice Chairs Taniguchi and Shimabukuro, and members of the Senate Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection and Senate Committee on Judiciary and Labor, thank you for this opportunity to testify on SB 2175 SD1, which would authorize the Dean of the College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa to establish a two-year industrial hemp remediation and biofuel research program.

We are not aware of compelling evidence of hemp as superior to other legal crops in accumulating toxins, nor of hemp as a superior source of cellulosic biofuels in comparison with legal grasses under investigation for this purpose. However, limited information is available on hemp due to its illegal status in the United States and limited cultivation elsewhere. Prior to 1938, hemp was an important source of paper pulp, but has subsequently been eclipsed by the forestry pulp industry.

While we appreciate the intent of the SD1 version of this bill to investigate new crops of potential value to Hawai'i, CTAHR has no internal resources to dedicate to a program of industrial hemp research, nor plans to establish such a program. SB 2175 SD1 appropriates no funds for this purpose.

However, should extramural funds be made available to faculty within CTAHR, and those faculty are able to comply with applicable state and federal regulations, we are supportive of all legally compliant crop research. We must note that although federal regulations may have been eased by passage of the Farm Bill, hemp is classified as a controlled substance under Chapter 329-1 of the Hawai'i Revised Statutes. Again, so long as the Hawai'i Department of Public Safety and the Department of Agriculture are prepared to facilitate research on hemp, and faculty who wish to conduct such research are in legal compliance, such research is perfectly permissible.

Thus, we believe that SB 2175 SD1 is unnecessary, since this research is allowable without it. No authorization by the legislature is necessary for legal faculty research, and no plans nor resources currently exist to establish a hemp research program at the college level.