



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Higher Education
Tuesday, March 18, 2014 at 2:34 p.m.

by

Dr. Vassilis L. Syrmos

Vice President for Research and Innovation, University of Hawai'i

SB3053 SD2 HD1 – RELATING TO UNMANNED AERIAL SYSTEMS TEST SITES

Chair Choy, Vice Chair Ichiyama, and members of the committee:

I respectfully submit testimony on behalf of the University of Hawai'i in support of SB3053 SD2 HD1 relating to unmanned aerial systems (UAS) test sites which proposes to establish the chief operating officer position, establish an advisory board to oversee and manage the test site operations, and appropriates the funds to staff and operate Hawai'i's unmanned aerial systems test site activities.

As a research institution that specializes in technologies and activities related to UAS, the University of Hawai'i supports this bill and perceives it as an opportunity for advancements in innovation, commercialization, and economic development. Hawai'i offers unique qualities to support the operations of a UAS such as its location within the Pacific and its proximity to the U.S. Pacific Command and other military test sites; and is considered to be an attractive location to the UAS industry for real development.

With the current organization and implementation of the Hawai'i/Alaska/Oregon Pan-Pacific Unmanned Aerial Systems Test Range Complex, it is essential that the UAS in Hawai'i be provided the resources to remain an active participant. The University of Hawai'i sees great value and potential in assisting with the establishment of UAS test sites due to its positive impacts for our State which range from emergency search and rescue operations, fisheries management, agricultural monitoring, reef health surveys, lava flow monitoring, disaster management and damage assessment, land use surveys, watershed management, mapping of coastal topography, and many other applications.

Thank you for your consideration and for the opportunity to submit testimony on this matter.