



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Written Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Higher Education
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By

Robert Bley-Vroman, Chancellor

And

Maria Gallo, Dean

And

J. Kenneth Grace, Associate Dean

College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources

University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

HB 504 HD1 – RELATING TO PESTICIDES

Chair Choy, Vice Chair Ichiyama, and members of the House Committee on Higher Education thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of HB 504 HD1, which Increases the pesticide licensing fee and amends authorized uses for moneys in the pesticide use revolving fund.

Although we defer to the Department of Agriculture on the fiscal and management implications of HB 504 HD1 within the department, we strongly support the self-funded partnership that this measure would establish between the Department of Agriculture and the University of Hawai'i in order to comprehensively address pesticide education, training and monitoring in the State of Hawai'i.

As written, this bill would increase infrastructure within both the Department of Agriculture and the College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, to address this area of much concern to both the agricultural community and the public at large. This would be done through user fees, at no cost to the State general fund.

In complementation to the pesticide applicator certification training undertaken by the Department of Agriculture, a pesticide extension specialist with the College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources focuses on education of farmers and other users in proper choice of pesticides for different pests and purposes; integration of pesticides with other non-chemical pest control methods in order to minimize pesticide use and environmental exposure; extension of new research results to help farmers change and adapt their pest control practices; and education of the public on pesticide risks and benefits, and response to public concerns.

The activities of the pesticide extension specialist are expected to lead to additional federal funding to Hawai'i, and more comprehensive education and training efforts than could be accomplished by either the Department or the University in isolation. For example, prior to his retirement a decade ago, Dr. Barry Brennan held a comparable position at the University and was successful in obtaining grant funds from US EPA and USDA to found and support immigrant farmer training in pesticide safety and effective pest management. Through distribution of educational materials, Dr. Brennan was also active in public education, including mitigating public concerns during the heptachlor emergency of the 1980s.

Without a funding mechanism such as that proposed in HB 504 HD1, a university pesticide extension specialist position is now difficult to justify, since the position may not directly contribute to student tuition revenues under current budget models. Thus, we believe it is very important to maintain support for this position in HB 504 HD1, and we are glad to partner with the Department of Agriculture on this comprehensive approach to pesticide education and training.