



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Written Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Hawaiian Affairs

and

Senate Committee on Agriculture
Friday, February 6, 2015 at 1:15 pm

By

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And

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And

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SB 434 – RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Chairs Shimabukuro and Ruderman, Vice Chairs Galuteria and Riviere, and members of the Senate Committee on Hawaiian Affairs, and Senate Committee on Agriculture, we respectfully submit testimony in support of SB 434, which update the State's agricultural planning statute to add the growth and development of traditional Hawaiian farming systems and traditional Hawaiian crops, and the growth and development of small-scale farms, as agricultural objectives.

We fully support both inclusion of traditional crops and agricultural practices, and support for small farms in the economic objectives for the State of Hawai'i. The most recent (2012) census documents that 63% of the 7,000 farms in the State are less than 10 acres in size. These very small farms produce family food, vegetables and animal products for local sale and consumption, and such high value crops as herbs and cut flowers. Further, 88% of our farms are less than 50 acres in size, and would still be considered small by many standards. These small and very small farms represent diversified agriculture in Hawaii, and in large part are the agricultural clients served by the extension service of the College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa.

Traditional crops such as taro and breadfruit are nutritious, culturally significant and viewed as essential components of food security in Hawai'i; and are also now recognized as having great potential value for export as well (e.g., gluten-free breadfruit flour). Traditional agricultural practices are not only valuable means of crop production, but also serve to inform all agricultural development in the Hawaiian Islands.

Thank you for this opportunity to express the support of the University of Hawai'i for SB 434.