



# UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

## Legislative Testimony

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Testimony Presented Before the  
House Committee on Government Reform  
Wednesday, February 3, 2021 at 8:30 a.m.

By  
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### HB 531 – RELATING TO AGRICULTURAL LANDS

Chair McKelvey, Vice Chair Wildberger, and members of the House Committee on Government Reform:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony regarding HB 531. Unfortunately, we cannot support and oppose the role that the College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (CTAHR) is being given in the language of this bill. The following tasks are identified for CTAHR:

1. “identify available state agricultural land that may be leased to the contractor to grow the produce”
2. “transmit to the purchasing agency and the department of agriculture a recommendation.”

While we can see, and support, that the intent of the bill is to assist individuals to find appropriate farm land, CTAHR does not have the manpower for these activities. In addition, these activities are not the mission of CTAHR which is defined as:

The College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources creates and delivers knowledge that supports and strengthens families, agricultural and food systems, and the natural environment. We educate and serve the people of Hawai'i and those from around the world with integrity and excellence.

CTAHR's role is one of education and research. Education is accomplished via our undergraduate and graduate degree programs. It is further accomplished through our Hawai'i Cooperative Extension Service. Research is accomplished as a major part of the Hawai'i Agriculture Experiment Stations.

In addition, the pandemic has caused a significant decrease in CTAHR's manpower. The legislature swept 26 positions and we currently have over 25 positions frozen. This represents a 19% decrease in capacity.

Due to the tasks being assigned, considering our mission, and due to our manpower issues, we regrettably testify in opposition to the role that CTAHR is given in HB 531.