



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Finance
Thursday, February 25, 2021 at 11:00 a.m.

By
Nicholas Comerford, Dean
College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

HB 834 HD1 – RELATING TO BLACK CINDER CONE QUARRY SITE SURVEY

Chair Luke, Vice Chair Cullen, and members of the House Committee on Finance:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 834 HD1 as it relates to the need for sources of black cinder cone for agriculture.

The floriculture industry is an important component of the Hawai'i agriculture industry. It is part of the “nursery, greenhouse, floriculture and sod” category found in the 2017 agricultural census by the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s National Agriculture Statistic Service. The value of that category in 2017 was \$100,381,000.

The cinder material is a critical component of the beds in which many commercial flowers can be grown. Experience has shown the advantage of using black cinder cone material over red, therefore the black is preferred.

The University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (UHM/CTAHR) works closely with the flower industry, with particular reference to our plant breeding program. Since the 1950's UHM/CTAHR has been providing new varieties of anthuriums at the rate of approximately one per year. The cinder cone material is also used in container grown plants, as does the landscape industry.

For these reasons, and in support of this very important industry whose flower materials are renowned beyond the borders of Hawai'i, we support this bill.

However, we are aware of the current financial climate of the State of Hawai'i and realize that state funding is reduced. For this reason, UH defers to DLNR on their budgetary issues and priorities.