



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce
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HB 871 – RELATING TO AGRICULTURAL ENTERPRISES

Chair Johanson, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and members of the House Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce:

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in strong support of HB 871 relating to agricultural enterprises.

Given the desire by the state government, state agencies, and University of Hawai'i at Mānoa (UHM), College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (CTAHR) to increase all aspects of agriculture for the benefit of the residents of Hawai'i, the Hawai'i Department of Agriculture (HDOA) requires the ability and authority that is outlined in this bill.

HB 871 gives HDOA the ability and authority to accomplish its basic mission to “conserve and protect agricultural lands, promote diversified agriculture, increase agricultural self-sufficiency and assure the availability of agriculturally suitable lands.”

UHM/CTAHR understands, through experience, that HDOA is critical to the agricultural future of the state of Hawai'i. It is tasked with diverse responsibilities and focuses on those responsibilities with limited manpower and monetary resources. HB 871 and its intent are fundamental to HDOA's mission.

Given the state's current economic situation, HB 871 will also be a mechanism for implementing the needed changes and management objectives with which HDOA is tasked.

Therefore, the University strongly supports the intent of this bill, but is aware of the current financial climate of the State of Hawai'i and realizes that state funding is reduced. For the next fiscal biennium, the University of Hawai'i Board of Regents approved a budget request for the University that was flat, and did not seek any increased funding to the University. UH defers to HDOA on their priorities.