



# UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

## ‘ŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAII

### Legislative Testimony

### Hō'ike Mana'o I Mua O Ka 'Aha'ōlelo

Testimony Presented Before the  
House Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems  
Friday, February 10, 2023 at 10:00 a.m.

By

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And

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#### HB 310 – RELATING TO AGRICULTURE EDUCATION

Chair Gates, Vice Chair Kahaloa, and Members of the House Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 310 relating to agriculture education and appropriates funds to the University of Hawai'i (UH) for the College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (CTAHR), UH Mānoa, to establish an agriculture education coordinator position.

As mentioned in HB 310, CTAHR convened the P-20 Agriculture Education Working Group, and the major recommendation contained in the group's final report to the 2019 legislature was the recommendation to appoint an agriculture education coordinator. This bill is a continuing attempt to act on that recommendation. We believe that the work done by the Working Group was highly collaborative and valuable, and that the need for such a program coordinator is justified.

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated that the State of Hawai'i must create a more sustainable agriculture industry to support local food production and a diverse agricultural economy.

If HB 310 is passed and funded, this agriculture education coordinator will work across the UH system, including our Community Colleges, Hawai'i Department of Education, as well as other members representing the original Working Group.

Better coordination of already existing agriculture education programs across the State, will provide a diversity of educational options to meet Hawai'i's needs to "grow more farmers".

Furthermore, by working together we will be able to increase the number of people in our State that will have the professional and technical skills to pursue employment opportunities in food and agriculture.

In summary, the University of Hawai'i supports HB 310 provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities as indicated in our Board of Regents approved budget.