UNIVERSITY OF HAWAIʻI SYSTEM
ʻŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAIʻI

Legislative Testimony
Hōʻike Manaʻo I Mua O Ka ʻAhaʻōlelo

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Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Higher Education & Technology
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By
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HB 812 – RELATING TO THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII

Chair Perruso, Vice Chair Kapela, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure, which appropriates funds to the University of Hawaiʻi (UH) for various university programs and projects. UH System supports the intent of the measure, provided that it can be affirmed by the specific academic programs that the funding is appropriate to deliver whatever the desired work product. I can not confirm the adequacy of the individual programs and projects identified in HB 812 as they were not vetted or requested by the UH nor were they approved by the UH Board of Regents.

The following table provides a breakout of the items in the bill along with the appropriation amounts for Fiscal Year 2023-2024 (FY24) and Fiscal Year 2024-2025 (FY25).

Description	Unit	FY24	FY25
Hawaiʻi Climate-Smart Commodities Program	CTAHR	$ 6,670,000	$ 6,670,000
STEM training through Hawaiʻi Space Flight Laboratory	SOEST	$ 1,000,000	$ 1,000,000
Center for Pacific Innovations, Knowledge, and Opportunities	JABSOM	$ 3,000,000	$ 3,000,000
Change Hawaiʻi Project and Hawaiʻi Mesonet Project	ESPSCOR & WRRC	$ 1,000,000	$ 1,000,000
Prototype Designer Artificial Coral Reef Project	SOEST & ARL	$ 125,000,000	$ 125,000,000

UH System supports these programs and projects, as long as it does not conflict or override those items identified in the budget request approved by the Board of Regents at its November 17, 2022 meeting.

Hawaiʻi Climate-Smart Commodities Program - CTAHR has developed an interdisciplinary group of faculty focused on understanding soil health and how practices that increase soil health also lead to increased carbon sequestration and reduced emissions of greenhouse gases. In an approach often referred to as climate-smart agriculture (commodities), this faculty group is teaming up with growers around the state to sustainably measure, monitor, report and verify the carbon and greenhouse gas benefits associated with practices that increase soil health.

The UH-Mānoa **Hawaiʻi Space Flight Laboratory (HSFL)** builds, tests, and flies satellites with cutting edge science missions while engaging approximately 440 undergraduate students over the past five years. The Robotic Space Exploration Lab builds, tests, and encodes artificial intelligence into planetary surface vehicles, like rovers. Together, we train middle school students, high school students, undergraduates, graduate students, and educators across the state of Hawaiʻi in these advanced capabilities.

The **Center for Pacific Innovations, Knowledge, and Opportunities (PIKO)** is building a clinical and translational research (CTR) infrastructure to improve the health and wellbeing of Native Hawaiians, Pacific Islanders, and Filipinos and other medically underserved populations in Hawaiʻi.

Change Hawaiʻi is a project bringing together climate science and data science to address Hawaiʻi's most pressing climate-change-related research questions. This project will yield critically-needed new research on how Hawaiʻi's climate will change and what impacts it will have, for example on water resources and natural ecosystems. The Hawaiʻi Climate Data Portal (HCDP) will provide access to a comprehensive archive of historical and real-time climate data and serve as the basis for much of the work. The HCDP will benefit greatly from the data provided by the new cutting edge weather and climate monitoring network – The Hawaiʻi Mesonet.

The Hawaiʻi Mesonet is a statewide advanced weather and climate monitoring network of approximately 100 telemetered stations, now under construction. The data from the Hawaiʻi Mesonet is vitally important for a wide range of different uses, including weather forecasting, flood warning, fire warning, emergency management, water resource management, agriculture, ranching, cultural resource protection, ecosystem protection, recreation, and research on weather and climate, hydrological process, ecosystem processes, and many other topics. This network will become a major part of the infrastructure needed to support research, planning, and management for a climate smart future in Hawaiʻi.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure. We are ready to answer systemwide questions and questions regarding individual programs or projects may be best answered by the appropriate UH department.