



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 Water & Land
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By

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HB 876 – RELATING TO NATIVE POLLINATORS

Chair Ichiyama, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on HB 876, which requires the University of Hawai'i to develop native pollinator habitats to be deployed on all campuses in the University system. While the University of Hawai'i (UH) is supportive of the broad objective in this bill, in examining the science and mechanics that would be placed on the UH as an obligation, we find that this necessitates more time to consider implementation requirements.

For example, there already exists on some campuses native landscaping and exclusively native plants landscape areas. The UH has found that invasive or non-native plants that do not support yellow-faced bee species will need to be eliminated or managed in any habitat such that they do not adversely affect yellow-faced bee host plants. The habitats necessary for recovery in each geographic unit will require long-term management and protection in perpetuity.

Another example is the UH's bee research and academic program. Currently, UH Hilo has a 110-acre farm located in Pana'ewa that supports hands-on teaching, research and community outreach. The farm has a 3-acre area dedicated to honey bees that has supported the beekeeping courses and a certificate, walking tours and community outreach activities. While honey bees are essential to the pollination of agricultural crops and show the importance of the relationship of pollinators to food production, native pollinators, primarily the solitary Hawaiian yellow faced bee, are more selective towards the pollination of native plants. Regardless, the same relationship exists with both types of bees, without the pollinator, the plants would not thrive or possibly exist.

The honey bee area at the UH Hilo farm includes a 1-acre garden that demonstrates the resources for their needs such as water, food, and shelter. A similar area at the farm to promote resource needs for native pollinators including birds and insects would be a good fit and add even more understanding to the relationships between plants, animals, and humans for students and the community alike. In addition, UH Hilo is currently

transitioning to the use of more native plants on their main campus as part of their sustainability efforts.

UH would respectfully request that this measure be deferred and UH will work with the introducer of the bill on drafting a concurrent resolution encouraging the UH to develop native pollinator habitats to be deployed on campuses in the UH system suitable for this purpose.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on this measure.