



# 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 Higher Education and Technology  
Wednesday, February 14, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.

By

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And

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#### HB 2138 HD1 – RELATING TO AGRICULTURE EDUCATION

Chair Perruso, Vice Chair Kapela, and Members of the House Committee on Higher Education and Technology:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 2138 HD1 relating to agriculture education and appropriates funds to the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa for the College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (CTAHR), to establish an agriculture education coordinator position.

As mentioned in HB 2138 HD1, 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 impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and natural disasters have 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 2138 HD1 is passed and funded, this agriculture education coordinator will work across the University of Hawai'i system, 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, CTAHR supports HB 2138 HD1 provided that its passage does not impact priorities as indicated in our Board of Regents approved budget.