



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 & Technology
Wednesday, February 14, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.

By
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HB 2153 – RELATING TO THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII

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

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written comments on HB 2153 which establishes and appropriates funds for an air and space law program (Program) at the William S. Richardson School of Law (Richardson Law).

Establishing the Program would require significant resources, including additional faculty and staff, physical space, and equipment (including library materials). These resources would not only be necessary at the start, but continuously and perhaps expand as this area is developing. Given the University of Hawai'i's (UH) commitment to being an institution that advances UH Mānoa as a Native Hawaiian Place of Learning, Richardson Law staff and faculty would anticipate also being in frequent and close conversation with the Hawai'i inuiākea School of Hawaiian Knowledge, our own Ka Huli Ao Center for Excellence in Native Law, our Environmental Law Program and our International and Comparative Law Program, as space law relates to each of these specialty areas. If such a program were funded, each of these certificate programs should have additional faculty who are expert in the implications of space law to these various areas.

Space law programs exist in the United States including University of Mississippi School of Law (Air and Space Law), the most prominent, and the University of Washington (Space Law, Data and Policy Program). Internationally, the schools of law at Leiden University in the Netherlands and McGill University in Montreal also feature prominent programs. This field is growing. Tulane Law School received a \$1 million gift to establish a space law program that builds on its maritime and law of the sea programs, which are related to outer space law.

As noted in HB 2153, space law touches on a multitude of related legal topics: cybersecurity, air and space security, aerospace business, and environmental law. At present, Richardson Law offers a survey course on space law; no professors are experts in this area. A director to build and run the new program and professors who teach, write, and/or work in this area would need to be recruited and hired to develop and implement curriculum and programming, including the LLM and certificate programs referenced in the bill.

We respectfully suggest that we start a conversation with those interested in space law to continue enhancing these programmatic and course offerings. We continue to stay abreast of many legal arenas in which we can innovate and provide a paramount legal education to our Richardson Law students and serve as experts for our State and we welcome your support in this regard.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony on HB 2153 provided that its passage does not impact priorities as indicated in our Board of Regents Approved Budget.