



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

‘ŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAII

Legislative Testimony

Hō'ike Mana'o I Mua O Ka 'Aha'ōlelo

Testimony Presented to the
House Committee on Finance
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By

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HB 2664 – RELATING TO SPORTS FACILITIES

Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and Members of the Committee:

The University of Hawai'i (University or UH) would like to provide comments on HB 2664 which among other things, transfers certain special fund moneys earmarked for the development of a new stadium in Halawa to the general fund and reappropriates those funds to plan, design, and construct a new stadium at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa (UH Mānoa) campus. The University does not support transferring funding away from the New Aloha Stadium and Entertainment District (NASED) project at present as its procurement is currently underway.

The prolonged project to replace Aloha Stadium has been detrimental to the University. The abrupt closure of the stadium and start-stop-restart-stop-start again progress to the project has resulted in UH having to undertake extraordinary efforts to build a temporary facility and find millions of dollars over the last four years to address the state's deficiency of a stadium facility. In losing Aloha Stadium, UH and other users have been displaced for a lack of a stadium venue – many of those users have also had to be accommodated at UH. All this being said, after four long years, the NASED project's procurement is currently finally underway soliciting for possible private development teams that could construct the new stadium and undertake the surrounding development. The University's interest is in seeing a path forward where a stadium will be constructed timely. The project is already beyond the date originally forecasted when Aloha Stadium was closed.

I believe HB 2664 may be partially driven by the shared frustration of the NASED project's progress. However, the University supports the NASED project as the path for the state to construct its stadium. And, the University expects that the development and business structure of the project will result in a facility that makes financial sense to the state and the University to utilize. NASED has been promised to give the University a better financial arrangement than previously existed with Aloha Stadium. Given the

current status of the procurement process for NASED, the University wants to see NASED succeed – and, get underway expeditiously.

If the project is further delayed or should the procurement process not satisfy the state objectives and the project deliverables, a bill like HB 2664 would be more timely. For the \$370,000,000 in funds contemplated in HB 2664 for construction of a stadium at the UH Mānoa campus would likely be a sufficient amount for a collegiate-level stadium facility. However, it would not be enough to construct the type of stadium that is contemplated in Halawa at the UH Mānoa campus. While a stadium on campus would support UH collegiate football, it would probably not be able to support the same community expectations that are being sought at Halawa due to community traffic and parking needs at an already saturated Mānoa campus. As has already been experienced over the past four years, UH is not adequately staffed or managed to support broad community (non-UH) events on campus.

For these reasons, UH supports, needs, and expects the NASED project to be successful.