



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Agriculture
and

House Committee on Lower and Higher Education
Friday, March 15, 2019 at 2:25 p.m.

By

Nicholas Comerford

Dean, College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources

And

Michael Bruno

Interim Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs

Vice Chancellor for Research

University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

SB 303 – RELATING TO GARDENS

Chairs Creagan and Woodson, Vice Chairs DeCoite, Hashem, and Perruso, and members of the House Committee on Agriculture and House Committee on Lower and Higher Education:

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of SB 303 relating to gardens in schools and communities. The bill requires that the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa (UHM), College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (UHM/CTAHR) should be consulted regarding best practices in gardening, including vertical gardening, aquaponics, and community gardening.

UHM/CTAHR is the home of the Cooperative Extension Service. As part of that program, it runs a statewide Master Gardener Program, has edible crop and ornamental extension agents in each county and is the home of the Pearl City Urban Garden Center, which has extensive plantings and offers extension courses that are directly related to this bill. Unless suggested faculty number cuts currently being considered in this year's legislature reduce UHM/CTAHR's personnel, our Cooperative Extension Service can provide the consultation required by the bill. UHM/CTAHR, in collaboration with UHM/SOEST, is in the process of hiring an extension specialist in aquaculture; and the position should be filled by the time this bill goes into effect.

In summary, CTAHR is capable and ready to collaborate with the specifics of this bill should it be passed into law and should faculty numbers not be reduced.

Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony in support of SB 303.