



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Ways and Means
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By
Nicholas Comerford, Dean
College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources
And
Michael Bruno, PhD
Provost
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

SB 2711 SD1 – RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of the intent of SB 2711 SD1 that establishes a foreign agriculture small equipment pilot project.

The idea behind the bill is worthy in that given the prevalence of small farms in the state, and the need to improve the technology used on those farms, and that typical farm equipment is not of the right size to be effective on small farms. The need for equipment of appropriate size is clear.

The issue we see with this bill is that it does not clearly identify objectives for the pilot program. As written it includes identifying foreign agriculture technology, purchasing equipment, and retrofitting equipment engines to comply with Environmental Protection Agency standards.

Not included in the objectives is a list of what foreign technology beyond small tractors should be considered; nor does it include testing of the equipment on small farms in Hawai'i. If the objective is to see if it can be done, then the revision to this measure to have the University of Hawai'i (UH) serve as the lead agency to establish a foreign agriculture small equipment pilot program at a community college of its choosing is appropriate as they have the appropriate shop(s) to do the retrofitting, as well as to provide students a useful educational experience. In addition, the shop program may also be able to test the machinery in the field.

If the future is to consider buying equipment and lending it out as needed, that is typically done, in other states, through the county Soil and Water Conservation Districts.

We recognize the need for this equipment, and we would support a stronger plan that includes the appropriate state organizations.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of the intent with concerns on SB 2711 SD1 and provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities as indicated in our BOR Approved Budget.