



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Higher Education
and
Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment
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SB 2729 – RELATING TO AQUACULTURE

Chairs Kim and Gabbard, Vice Chairs Kidani and Ruderman, and members of the Senate Committee on Higher Education and Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in strong support of SB 2729 that appropriates funds for the University of Hawai'i (UH) College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (CTAHR or the LANDGRANT program of UH) and the Sea Grant College Program (the SEAGRANT program of UH) to support the sustainable growth of the local aquaculture industry by establishing two (2) permanent Aquaculture Extension Agent positions and one (1) permanent Aquaculture Research position.

This bill is an outcome of the Hawai'i Interagency Biosecurity Plan which seeks to support safe growth in the aquaculture industry. The CTAHR/LANDGRANT and SEAGRANT programs at UH have long been collaborators in research.

The existing team of University of Hawai'i at Mānoa (UHM) personnel that support aquaculture in the state includes:

- one (1) permanent Aquaculture Researcher in CTAHR/LANDGRANT;
- one temporary grant-funded Extension Agent with SEAGRANT stationed in Hilo; and
- one (1) joint appointed permanent Aquaculture Specialist shared between CTAHR/LANDGRANT and SEAGRANT.

These are the only CTAHR/LANDGRANT and SEAGRANT resources currently carved out from UHM resources to help the industry develop and thrive.

The development of an aquaculture industry in Hawai'i will depend on continued research and extension. We have already seen the value of that research in the expertise that the current faculty provide, such as in deciding what species to import to support aquaculture, via testimony to the Hawai'i Department of Agriculture Advisory Board.

This bill supports the biosecurity of aquaculture in the state by providing the following:

1. it would enhance the Extension Agent support for aquaculture state-wide with the second permanent Aquaculture Extension Agent position in CTAHR/LANDGRANT;
2. it would provide much needed research support to aquaculture with the permanent Aquaculture Researcher in CTAHR/LANDGRANT working with a focus on biosecurity; and
3. it would make the temporary grant-funded Extension Agent in Hilo with SEAGRANT a permanent position.

The budgetary issue related to these positions are itemized below.

Extension Agents (2): Position numbers for each agent, plus \$80,000 per year salary.

Researcher: Position number plus, \$84,000 per year salary.

Total annual budget: 3 position numbers and \$244,000 per year.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in strong support of this bill provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities as indicated in our BOR Approved Budget.