



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Water and Land
Monday, February 8, 2021 at 1:00 p.m.

By
Nicholas Comerford, Dean
College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

SB 999 – RELATING TO FORESTRY

Chair Inouye, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and members of the Senate Committee on Water and Land:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB 999 as it relates to the College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (CTAHR). CTAHR's Natural Resources and Environmental Management Department and the Tropical Plant and Soil Sciences Department are engaged in education, research and extension that addresses all the benefits of trees in building healthy soils; and the role of forests in maintaining and enhancing environmental quality.

We acknowledge the need for repair and upgrading of tree nurseries in the state; and the need for research and continued education about the role that individual trees and forests play in climate change and environmental quality.

This bill requires the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DNLR) to:

1. Work in collaboration with the greenhouse gas sequestration task force. CTAHR is represented on this task force and we support this approach.
2. Work in collaboration with researchers from CTAHR. CTAHR has ongoing research in the areas outlined in this bill. In fact, CTAHR acquires funding from DLNR to engage in research in a variety of relevant areas. We support the continued and fruitful collaboration that exists and look to enhancement that collaboration. We understand the value of agroforestry systems and support the approach expressed in this bill.
3. There is a clear need for continued education. CTAHR is the home of the Cooperative Extension Service and looks forward to any and all collaborations with DLNR to extend education in Extension settings.

We support this bill in its intent and in those aspects that pertain to CTAHR. However, we are aware of the current financial climate of the State of Hawai'i and realizes that state funding is reduced. For the next fiscal biennium, the University of Hawai'i Board of Regents approved a budget request for the University that was flat, and did not seek any increased funding to the University. UH defers to DLNR on their priorities.