UNIVERSITY OF HAWAIʻI SYSTEM
Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment
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SB 2988 – RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Nishihara, and members of the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB 2988 which is similar to HB 1714, but different levels of detail.

The two-lined spittlebug is another challenge to the biosecurity of Hawaiʻi agriculture. The bill does a credible job of describing the problem and its potential effect. The spittlebug will continue to degrade Hawaiʻi Island pasture and affect livestock operations if a coherent integrated pest management program is not identified and extended to producers. This problem will require the combined efforts of the Hawaiʻi Department of Agriculture (HDOA), the University of Hawaiʻi at Mānoa, College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (UHM/CTAHR), and the appropriate federal agencies on Hawaiʻi Island.

UHM/CTAHR is currently involved with spittlebug research and Extension efforts through an Extension Specialist on Hawaiʻi Island and a Professor of Entomology on the Mānoa campus. There is also a clear role for the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Interregional Research Project No. 4 (IR-4) program, which could also be a source of federal funds. The IR-4 mission is to test the efficacy of pesticides and develop data to label the chemistry for specific uses.

SB 2988 budgets funds to combat this pest, and puts those funds and decision making authority in the hands of the HDOA. We strongly support this effort as UHM/CTAHR already works closely with HDOA on this and on other biosecurity issues.

We support SB 2988, but defer to the HDOA as to their priorities and availability of personnel to support this measure.