



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

‘ŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAII

Legislative Testimony

Hō'ike Mana'o I Mua O Ka 'Aha'ōlelo

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment
Senate Committee on Higher Education
Tuesday, February 14, 2023 at 3:07 p.m.

By

Anna Wieczorek, Interim Dean
College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources

And

Michael Bruno, Provost
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

SB 663 – RELATING TO THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII

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

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB 663 relating to the University of Hawai'i and appropriates funds for a full-time agricultural education coordinator in the College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (CTAHR), University of Hawai'i at Mānoa.

As mentioned in SB 663, CTAHR convened the P-20 Agriculture Education Working Group, and the major recommendation contained in the group's final report to the 2019 legislature was the recommendation to appoint an agriculture education coordinator. This bill is a continuing attempt to act on that recommendation. We believe that the work done by the Working Group was highly collaborative and valuable, and that the need for such a program coordinator is justified.

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated that the State of Hawai'i must create a more sustainable agriculture industry to support local food production and a diverse agricultural economy.

If SB 663 is passed and funded, this agriculture education coordinator will work across the UH system, including our Community Colleges, Hawai'i Department of Education, as well as other members representing the original Working Group.

Better coordination of already existing agriculture education programs across the State, will provide a diversity of educational options to meet Hawai'i's needs to "grow more farmers".

Furthermore, by working together we will be able to increase the number of people in our State that will have the professional and technical skills to pursue employment opportunities in food and agriculture.

In summary, the University of Hawai'i supports SB 663 provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities as indicated in our Board of Regents Approved Budget.