



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 Higher Education
Tuesday, February 13, 2024 at 3:01 p.m.

By

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And

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SB 2060 – RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Chair Kim, Vice Chair Kidani, and Members of the Senate Committee on Higher Education:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB 2060 to establish a permanent educational support associate position within the University of Hawai'i College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (CTAHR), to provide support to the coffee and orchard crops extension and applied research program at the Kona Research Station.

The coffee industry is the third highest valued agricultural commodity of Hawai'i. Coffee is grown on 7,100 acres, has a farm gate value worth approximately \$60,000,000 and green coffee value of about \$113,000,000. With the state's first detection of the Coffee Berry Borer in 2010, and with the arrival of Coffee Leaf Rust in 2020, this important crop faces serious threats to its existence. CTAHR Cooperative Extension, in partnership with the Pacific Basin Agricultural Research Center, Hawai'i Agriculture Research Center, Hawai'i Department of Agriculture, Synergistic Hawai'i Agriculture Council, and numerous coffee grower associations, has helped develop and share integrated pest management practices to the coffee growers of Hawai'i.

The estimated annual economic benefit to Hawai'i coffee growers because of the implementation of integrated pest management practices recommended by CTAHR Cooperative Extension is valued at \$33,000,000 per year.

In order to extend the reach of the one Extension agent in Hawai'i whose primary duties are focused on coffee and orchard crop production, this bill provides funding for one full-time equivalent permanent educational support position to assist the Extension agent working out of the Kona Research Station. This action would significantly amplify the positive effects of this Extension educational effort to support the Hawai'i coffee industry.

We support this bill, as it will have a significant positive economic impact for the coffee growers of Hawai'i provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities as indicated in our Board of Regents Approved Budget. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on the measure.