



# 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  
Thursday, February 1, 2024 at 3:00 p.m.

By

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And

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### SB 2817 – RELATING TO THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII COLLEGE OF TROPICAL AGRICULTURE AND HUMAN RESOURCES

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

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on SB 2817 relating to the University of Hawai'i College of Tropical Agriculture Human Resources (CTAHR) which appropriates funds out of the University of Hawai'i tuition and fees special fund for fiscal year 2024-2025 for CTAHR to establish five administrative, professional, and technical full-time equivalent (5.0 APT FTE) positions.

CTAHR supports the intent of this bill however, we respectfully offer suggested amendments. Specifically, this bill aims to help rectify significant gaps in the reach of Cooperative Extension programs due to vacancies that have surfaced in the past four years. We suggest the following amendments to SECTION 2 based on the distinction between extensions positions and administrative, professional and technical (APT) positions. Extension Agents are 100% allocated to extension activities; they transmit information to stakeholders and may collaborate on research efforts. Extension Specialists typically have a split full-time equivalent appointment allocated to extension, research or instruction. Extension Specialists typically conduct applied research addressing immediate issues, and provide information to Extension Agents or directly disseminate information to stakeholders. APT positions do not perform extension, research or instruction activities and do not transmit information to stakeholders.

#### SUGGESTED ADMENDMENTS:

SECTION 2. There is appropriated out of the general revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$500,000 or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2024-2025 for the CTHAR at the UHM to establish five full-time equivalent (5.0 FTE) positions; provided that the sums appropriated shall be expended as follows:

- (1) \$ for one full-time equivalent (1.0 FTE) extension agent in water quality and conservation in the county of Maui;

- (2) \$        for one full-time equivalent (1.0 FTE) extension agent in livestock in Hilo, county of Hawaii;
- (3) \$        for one full-time equivalent (1.0 FTE) state extension specialist in livestock at the university of Hawaii at Manoa;
- (4) \$        for one full-time equivalent agent in urban horticulture and food systems in the city and county of Honolulu; and
- (5) \$        for one full-time equivalent (1.0 FTE) extension agent in health and community development in the county of Maui.

The sum appropriate shall be expended by the university of Hawaii for the purposes of this Act.

CTAHR's Cooperative Extension relies on the knowledge and experience of county extension agents and extension specialists to extend research-based knowledge from the land-grant university out to the residents and agricultural producers of the state. That capability has been severely hampered by a string of resignations and retirements happening just prior to, and during, the COVID-19 pandemic. Agricultural producers from around the state have expressed how important these noted positions are essential to the health and well-being of Hawaii's agricultural producers and consumers.

We can support SB 2817 with the suggested amendments, provided its adoption 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.