



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
Senate Committee on Labor and Technology
Tuesday, February 11, 2025 at 3:05 p.m.

By

Vassilis L. Syrmos
Vice President for Research and Innovation
University of Hawai'i System

SB 1622 – RELATING TO ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Chairs Kim and Aquino, Vice Chairs Kidani and Lee, and Members of the Committees:

The University of Hawai'i (UH) strongly supports SB 1622 which appropriates funds to establish an artificial intelligence (AI) institute within UH. As AI is rapidly transforming almost every aspect of daily life worldwide by enabling computers to simulate human learning, comprehension, problem solving, decision making, creativity, and autonomy, it is important for the state to stay ahead of this unprecedented evolution in technology.

The AI institute will take a unified approach for AI insertion within activities involving UH, the state, and the greater community to address guidelines and policy, workforce development and training, and research and development in services, industries and clusters. These areas, where both UH and the state have capacity and have made investments, include: clean/renewable energy, climate resilience, space sciences and engineering, health, sustainable agriculture, additive manufacturing, creative media, and cultural preservation.

The intent of this measure is to formalize and integrate the efforts, expertise, activities and approaches across UH's ten-campus system to serve as a resource for UH and the broader community to encourage economic development that is aligned with the state's needs. The University of Hawai'i intends to invest in the AI institute from revenue generated by its research activities and is asking the state to make an investment as a partner in this important initiative for the benefit of Hawai'i.

The University of Hawai'i supports SB 1622 provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities as indicated in UH's BOR Approved Budget.

Thank you.