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LATE TESTIMONY

Hawaii Crop Improvement Association

Growing the Future of Worldwide Agriculture in Hawaii

Testimony By: Alicia Maluafiti

HB 1273 – Relating to Appropriations
The House Committees on Agriculture
And Higher Education
Thursday, February 3, 2011
Room 312, 8:00 a.m.

Position: Strongly Support

Aloha Chairs Tsuji and Nishimoto, Vice Chairs Hashem and Nakashima, and members of the Committee:

My name is Alicia Maluafiti, Executive Director of the Hawaii Crop Improvement Association, a nonprofit trade association representing the seed industry in Hawaii. HCIA strongly supports HB 1273.

The College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (CTAHR) Cooperative Extension Service (CES) is a part of the world's largest non-traditional education system which can be found in almost all of the 3,150 counties in the 50 states as well as all of the U.S. Territories. Above and beyond our professional appreciation for CTAHR's biotechnology and agriculture program, CES supports important science-based information and educational programs that encompass a variety of topics and issues including home and garden, commercial ag, natural resources, soils, invasive species and pest control, and many more.

The Cooperative Extension Service continues to make major contributions in agriculture, youth development, family and community development, leadership development, natural resources and other areas in Hawaii. We believe it is critical to continue these unique and innovative opportunities that are embraced by the public as well as our agricultural community.

We ask you to please pass HB 1273. Mahalo for the opportunity to comment.

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UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Agriculture/Higher Education
February 3, 2011 at 2:00pm

By

Virginia Hinshaw
Chancellor

and

Sylvia Yuen

Interim Dean and Director of the College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 1273, Relating to Appropriations, which appropriates \$500,000 to the University of Hawai'i's Cooperative Extension Service, in the College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (CTAHR), to support the growth and sustainability of the agriculture industry. I am Sylvia Yuen, the Interim Dean and Director of CTAHR.

The Cooperative Extension Service has a long history of disseminating research-based information to farmers, food processors, and others in the field to promote the growth and sustainability of the agriculture industry. This is an extremely important role, as Hawai'i's agriculture is characterized by many small farmers and food producers who depend on CTAHR for their R&D (research and development) because they do not have the economy of scale and means to hire their own scientists. To illustrate, 64.0% of the farms in Hawai'i are comprised of less than 10 acres, compared with 10.6% in the nation as a whole. There is also a greater need for Cooperative Extension Services today than in the past, as producing food to ensure Hawai'i's food sufficiency and safety now requires more knowledge and skills. For example, there are more federal and State regulations to meet; more technology to master; more information about data, markets, and best practices to learn; and more management of energy, production, and other costs. These demands can be overwhelming, particularly for those who have limited education and are non- or limited-English speakers.

In addition, Hawai'i is vulnerable to invasions by insects, disease-bearing organisms, snakes, weeds, and other pests that threaten our agricultural industries. For example, in the last few months the coffee berry borer and basil downy mildew have been found in our state and are causing serious harm to industries that contribute millions of dollars to Hawai'i's economy. CTAHR's Cooperative Extension Service has been instrumental in addressing and controlling the damage caused by these pests: identifying the insect or pathogen, developing educational materials for dissemination, conducting workshops for growers, and partnering with the Department of Agriculture and U.S. Department of Agriculture to implement the best strategies to control and mitigate the problems.

The appropriation will enable the Cooperative Extension Service to fill critical personnel gaps and enhance its services throughout the state to support the growth and sustainability of the agriculture industry. We support HB 1273 provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities as indicated in the University's Board of Regents Approved Executive Biennium Budget.