



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Written Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Agriculture
Monday, January 27, 2014 at 9:30 am

by
Tom Apple, Chancellor
and
Maria Gallo
Dean

College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

HB 1989 – RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Chair Wooley, Vice Chair Onishi, and members of the House Committee on Agriculture, thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on HB 1989, which proposes to establish an on-farm mentoring program to teach and train farmers to utilize a whole system approach to agriculture.

While we agree with the intent of HB 1989 with respect to farmer training and improving soil health, this bill would charge the College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (CTAHR), University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, with development, implementation and management of an entirely new instructional system of private farmers acting as contractors and mentors, and appropriates funds to the University of Hawai'i solely for the purpose of providing grants of up to \$50,000 for this purpose to individual farmers or farming organizations. However, we do not believe that CTAHR is an appropriate entity to administer a program of grants to individual farmers, as required by this bill.

Administration of grants to private businesses is a more appropriate activity for state agencies such as the Hawai'i Department of Agriculture, or Department of Land and Natural Resources. As an academic unit within the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, CTAHR does not have infrastructure nor procedures in place to administer a program of grants to private individuals. Thus, we cannot support approval of this bill.

We are committed to working with farming organizations to achieve the goals of soil health, reduced input costs for farmers, and greater food self-sufficiency in Hawai'i, and we would like to encourage the Committee members to consider an alternative to establishing an entirely new state-funded system of private farming mentors. The Cooperative Extension Service directed by CTAHR has been engaged in assisting and training farmers in Hawai'i for over 100 years, and instructional programs within the University of Hawai'i System, including CTAHR, provide formal training in the skills needed to succeed in Hawaii's agricultural and food industries. Fiscal support for new and ongoing agricultural training programs, including support for temporary and permanent staff positions, would pay greater dividends than an entirely new system of private grants as proposed in HB 1989.



P.O. Box 253, Kunia, Hawai'i 96759
Phone: (808) 848-2074; Fax: (808) 848-1921
e-mail info@hfbf.org; www.hfbf.org

January 27, 2014

HEARING BEFORE THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

TESTIMONY ON HB 1989
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Room 312
9:30 AM

Chair Wooley, Vice Chair Nishihara, and Members of the Committee:

I am Christopher Manfredi, President of the Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation (HFBF). Organized since 1948, the HFBF is comprised of 1,832 farm family members statewide, and serves as Hawaii's voice of agriculture to protect, advocate and advance the social, economic and educational interest of our diverse agricultural community.

HFBF supports the intent of HB 1989 and would like to offer our comments. We certainly believe that local agriculture should be supported and encouraged. While it is true that the vast majority of food consumed in the state is imported, there are many complex factors that underlie this reality. Imported farm inputs are an important factor.

The farm technique mentoring program, as described in this bill, may be useful to assist niche market producers who are already using "natural" techniques and local inputs or are willing to experiment in these methods. We are interested in learning more details about the program, including the following:

- Who would provide the training---what expertise would be required to be a "mentor"
- How would the monetary grants to farmers and farm organizations be administered
- Would the grants be administered to commercial farmers (those who make their living from farming) or non-profit organizations that may compete with local farmers
- How would the program benefit the largest number of farmers

We defer to the College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this measure.

Written Testimony Presented Before the

House Committee on Agriculture

Monday, January 27, 2014; 9:30 am

by

J. Kenneth Grace

HB 1989 RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Chair Wooley, Vice Chair Onishi, and members of the House Committee on Agriculture, thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on HB 1989, which proposes to establish an on-farm mentoring program to teach and train farmers to utilize a whole system approach to agriculture.

My name is J. Kenneth Grace, and I am Interim Associate Dean and Associate Director for Research in the College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (CTAHR), University of Hawaii at Manoa. I am providing personal testimony today on SB 2037, and my testimony does not necessarily represent the position of either CTAHR or the University of Hawaii.

I agree with the intent of HB 1989 to help Hawaii's farmers minimize the expensive external inputs that they must buy by finding alternative, low-cost, methods to improve the health of their soil and the productivity of their farms. Although I must comment that there is currently little scientific evidence to support the use of some of the methods using indigenous microorganisms mentioned in HB 1989, there is increasing empirical evidence of the value of these methods, and CTAHR staff do indeed provide training in their use, as well as in other farm management methods. There is a very real need for more research to define why and when such methods are successful though, and funding to accomplish this would be a great step forward. These methods are not as well-known in the mainland USA, and it is virtually impossible at this point to obtain competitive federal funding to support this needed research.

However, this bill does not provide for such research, or directly for training through the well-established Cooperative Extension Service, under the direction of CTAHR. Rather, HB 1989 would charge the College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (CTAHR) with creation and management of an entirely new instructional system of private farmers acting as grantees, and appropriates funds to the University of Hawaii solely and exclusively for the purpose of providing grants of up to \$50,000 to individual farmers or their farming organizations. Providing grants to private companies and organizations is a valid activity of state agencies such as the Department of Agriculture, but CTAHR is an academic unit within the University of Hawaii at Manoa, and does not

have infrastructure nor procedures in place to administer a program of grants to private individuals, so far as I understand.

Moreover, I do not feel that asking our hard-working farmers to serve as independent mentors, and giving them grants to do so is the best approach to agricultural training, although it is a creative approach to dealing with the personnel and fiscal limitations of the Cooperative Extension Service in Hawaii. The Cooperative Extension Service directed by CTAHR has been engaged in assisting and training farmers in Hawaii for over 100 years, and instructional programs within the University of Hawaii System, including CTAHR, provide formal training in the skills needed to succeed in Hawaii's agricultural and food industries. Rather than mandating CTAHR to give grants to farmers to carry out what I believe are really the duties of the Extension Service, I believe it would be much more effective to direct greater support directly to training efforts of that Extension Service, which have always included on-farm workshops and other training; and to research to validate and explain the methods of soil improvement mentioned in HB 1989.

More direct involvement of successful farmers in this training is an excellent idea, but not as independent state-supported grantees, in my view. Personally, I am committed to working with my colleagues in CTAHR and with the Hawaii Farmers Union United and the Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation to facilitate these efforts. But, I do not believe that an entirely new system of private grants to independent contractors, even if it were possible for such a system to be administered by the University of Hawaii (which I believe it is not), is the best way to accomplish this, and so I must recommend against approval of HB 1989 in its present form. Although I will work to facilitate training opportunities for Hawaii's farmers, if direct grants to farmers is viewed as the more desirable approach, then I believe that a direct-report state agency, rather than an academic unit within UH should be consulted about managing such a grant program.

onishi2-Micah-Seth

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Saturday, January 25, 2014 11:16 PM
To: AGRtestimony
Cc: legechair@gmail.com
Subject: *Submitted testimony for HB1989 on Jan 27, 2014 09:30AM*

HB1989

Submitted on: 1/25/2014

Testimony for AGR on Jan 27, 2014 09:30AM in Conference Room 312

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Simon Russell	Hawaii Farmers Union United	Support	No

Comments:

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

Do not reply to this email. This inbox is not monitored. For assistance please email webmaster@capitol.hawaii.gov

onishi2-Micah-Seth

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Sunday, January 26, 2014 11:06 AM
To: AGRtestimony
Cc: mauiwit@hotmail.com
Subject: *Submitted testimony for HB1989 on Jan 27, 2014 09:30AM*

HB1989

Submitted on: 1/26/2014

Testimony for AGR on Jan 27, 2014 09:30AM in Conference Room 312

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Christine L. Andrews, J.D.	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

Do not reply to this email. This inbox is not monitored. For assistance please email webmaster@capitol.hawaii.gov

onishi2-Micah-Seth

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Sunday, January 26, 2014 10:27 AM
To: AGRtestimony
Cc: harriet@passengerplanet.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for HB1989 on Jan 27, 2014 09:30AM

HB1989

Submitted on: 1/26/2014

Testimony for AGR on Jan 27, 2014 09:30AM in Conference Room 312

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Harriet Witt	Individual	Support	No

Comments: We need this bill. Mahalo, Harriet Witt

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

Do not reply to this email. This inbox is not monitored. For assistance please email webmaster@capitol.hawaii.gov

onishi2-Micah-Seth

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Sunday, January 26, 2014 7:40 AM
To: AGRtestimony
Cc: jsimpliciano@gmail.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for HB1989 on Jan 27, 2014 09:30AM

HB1989

Submitted on: 1/26/2014

Testimony for AGR on Jan 27, 2014 09:30AM in Conference Room 312

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
james simpliciano	Individual	Support	No

Comments: We must acknowledge and be more diversified in the practices of agriculture. We believe natural farming helps in keeping Hawaii indigenous microorganisms from being endangered. Good nutritious foods begins in the life of the soil.

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

Do not reply to this email. This inbox is not monitored. For assistance please email webmaster@capitol.hawaii.gov

onishi2-Micah-Seth

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Sunday, January 26, 2014 7:27 AM
To: AGRtestimony
Cc: luann@tinroofranch.org
Subject: *Submitted testimony for HB1989 on Jan 27, 2014 09:30AM*

HB1989

Submitted on: 1/26/2014

Testimony for AGR on Jan 27, 2014 09:30AM in Conference Room 312

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
luann casey	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

Do not reply to this email. This inbox is not monitored. For assistance please email webmaster@capitol.hawaii.gov

onishi2-Micah-Seth

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Sunday, January 26, 2014 7:33 AM
To: AGRtestimony
Cc: robtarver1953@gmail.com
Subject: *Submitted testimony for HB1989 on Jan 27, 2014 09:30AM*

HB1989

Submitted on: 1/26/2014

Testimony for AGR on Jan 27, 2014 09:30AM in Conference Room 312

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Rob Tarver	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

Do not reply to this email. This inbox is not monitored. For assistance please email webmaster@capitol.hawaii.gov

onishi2-Micah-Seth

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Sunday, January 26, 2014 11:42 AM
To: AGRtestimony
Cc: 3333sd@gmail.com
Subject: *Submitted testimony for HB1989 on Jan 27, 2014 09:30AM*

HB1989

Submitted on: 1/26/2014

Testimony for AGR on Jan 27, 2014 09:30AM in Conference Room 312

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Sue Donaldson	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

Do not reply to this email. This inbox is not monitored. For assistance please email webmaster@capitol.hawaii.gov