

# HB 2007

## Testimony

Measure Title: RELATING TO AGRICULTURE.

Report Title: Appropriation; University of Hawaii; Local and Immigrant Farmer Education Program (§)

Description: Appropriates funds to the Local and Immigrant Farmer Education Program of the University of Hawaii College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources Cooperative Extension Service to support the growth and sustainability of the agriculture industry. Effective July 1, 2525. (HB2007 HD1)

Companion:

Package: None

Current Referral: HRE/AGL, WAM

Introducer(s): ONISHI, BROWER, CACHOLA, CHOY, MATSUMOTO, TAKAYAMA, TOKIOKA, WOOLEY



# UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

## Legislative Testimony

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Written Testimony Presented Before the  
Senate Committee on Higher Education  
and

Senate Committee on Agriculture  
Thursday, March 13, 2014 at 2:35 pm

By

Maria Gallo, Dean

and

J. Kenneth Grace, Interim Associate Dean  
College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources  
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

### HB 2007 HD1 – RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Chairs Taniguchi and Nishihara, Vice Chairs Kahele and Kouchi, and members of the Senate Committee on Higher Education and Senate Committee on Agriculture, thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of HB 2007 HD1, which appropriates funds to the Local and Immigrant Farmer Education (LIFE) Program of the University of Hawai'i College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (CTAHR) Cooperative Extension Service to support the growth and sustainability of the agriculture industry, effective July 1, 2014.

We support this bill provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities as indicated in the University's Board of Regents Approved Executive Biennium Budget.

The Local and Immigrant Farmer Education (LIFE) Program under the direction of the Cooperative Extension Service (CES) faculty within the College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (CTAHR), University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, serves socially disadvantaged and resource-limited producers, including recent immigrants from Southeast Asia and the Pacific Islands with limited English skills, Native Hawaiians, and women. The goals of this program are to: 1) increase the viability and sustainability of commercial farms in Hawai'i, 2) integrate more farmers into mainstream agriculture, and 3) help drive Hawaii's diversified industry forward.

The LIFE program has been built on collaborative partnerships and on-farm interactions. Its team-based approach includes collaborative partnerships with CTAHR programs (Risk Management Hawai'i, Aquaponics and Hydroponics Program, Sustainable and Organic Agriculture Program, Ag Incubator Program, Honeybee Program, Basil Swat Team, Hawai'i Tea Program, High Value Vaccinium Project, etc.), statewide Extension agents, agricultural agencies such as USDA (FSA, NRCS, etc.), Hawai'i Department of Agriculture, Hawai'i Department of Health, county agencies, Hawai'i Farm Bureau, Hawai'i Papaya Industry Association, Ka'u and Palehua coffee cooperative, O'ahu RC&D, Ag Foundation and other public and private organizations.

The reach of LIFE is statewide. For example, in FY2012, over 80 events were offered on all islands. Training opportunities address all aspects of successful farming, from soil fertility, crop production, aquaponics and pest management (including native-language workshops and educational materials) to distribution and marketing, and risk management with crop insurance. Risk management workshops, in partnership with the Risk Management Hawai'i program and with external funds provided by the USDA Risk Management agency, have been extremely popular, and have helped disadvantaged farmers to navigate both natural disasters and such devastating invasive pest events as the coffee berry borer.

LIFE is a grant funded effort, initially supported in early years through funding from the US EPA, and the USDA, and in subsequent years by the efforts of the CTAHR CES faculty team to apply for and obtain additional extramural grants.

HB 2007 HD1 would provide program support to sustain the LIFE program activities, which have perhaps never been more important than today, at time when food security, self-sufficiency and safety are paramount concerns; and regulatory costs and requirements pose serious difficulties for all Hawai'i farmers, and particularly the disadvantaged and often struggling segments of our diversified, small-farm agricultural community served by LIFE.

The amount of \$150,000 originally suggested in HB 2007 would support hire of an extension agent, support staff, and funding of interisland travel and operations.

Thank you for the opportunity to express our strong support for HB 2007 HD1.



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March 13, 2014

HEARING BEFORE THE  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

**TESTIMONY ON HB 2007, HD1  
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE**

Room 229  
2:35 PM

Aloha Chair Taniguchi, Chair Nishihara, Vice Chair Kahele, Vice Chair Kouchi, and Members of the Committees:

I am Christopher Manfredi, President of the Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation (HFB). Organized since 1948, the HFB 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 stands in strong support of HB 2007, HD1.**

I have had direct experience, through my work with the Ka'u coffee industry with the University of Hawaii's Local and Immigrant Farmer Education (LIFE) program and UH Risk Management-Hawaii (RMH) program. I have witnessed the direct benefit provided by these critically important programs that would be supported by the funding represented in this bill. I have watched first-hand as these programs contributed to the transformation of a community that was generationally dependant a plantation system to one of empowered independent businessmen and women. These programs provide the tools and knowledge required for underserved and socially disadvantaged producers to be successful in a modern agricultural economy.

The great work exhibited by the track record of these programs cannot be overstated.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure of great importance and for passing this bill.



SENATE COMMITTEES ON HIGHER EDUCATION AND AGRICULTURE  
Thursday, March 13, 2014 – 2:35 p.m. – Room 229

**Ulupono Initiative Strongly Supports HB 2007 HD 1, Relating to Agriculture**

Dear Chair Taniguchi, Vice Chair Kahele, Chair Nishihara, Vice Chair Kouchi and Members of the Committees:

My name is Kyle Datta and I am general partner of the Ulupono Initiative, a Hawai'i-based impact investment firm that strives to improve the quality of life for the people of Hawai'i by working toward solutions that create more locally grown food, increase renewable energy, and reduce/recycle waste. Ulupono invests in projects that have the potential to create large-scale, innovative change.

**Ulupono strongly supports HB 2007 HD 1**, which appropriates funds to the Local and Immigrant Farmer Education Program at the University of Hawai'i College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources Cooperative Extension Service. In our engagement with farmers and ranchers, many of them speak highly of the valuable hands-on advice that extension agents provide in helping them to grow their business and grow more local food. However, they are also very appreciative of extension agents' time because they know their services have greater demand than supply. In particular, extension agents provide the scientific background required to grow crops and animals. Most farmers are not scientists and therefore need assistance from someone with access to science-based knowledge. If the Cooperative Extension Service is able to receive more funding, farmers and ranchers will be able to make better strategic decisions to grow their businesses.

Furthermore, Ulupono helped to fund the Kunia Agricultural Park, which currently leases 187 acres to small to medium-sized farmers in Central O'ahu. During the tenant selection process, we were informed that the overwhelming majority of the applicants either did not speak English or English was not their primary language. Often, many of the applicants were recent immigrants. Besides dealing with the normal struggles of farming, these hard-working people were also finding difficulty dealing with a foreign culture and structures. Many of Hawai'i's future farmers are going to be immigrants and the extension agents are on the front lines helping these people to transition successfully into productive agricultural businesses. With the average age of a Hawai'i farmer near 60 years old, we need to assist those who can help new people who want to be farmers and ranchers.

We believe that working together we can help produce more local food, support an economically strong homegrown agriculture industry, which strengthens our community with fresh, healthy food. Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Respectfully,

Kyle Datta  
General Partner

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February 24, 2014

**HB 2007 HD1: FUNDING OF THE LIFE PROGRAM, UH CTAHR**

Chair Taniguchi, Kanahale, Nishihara and Kouchi and members of the Senate Committee on Higher Education and Agriculture, I thank you for this opportunity to provide my personal testimony in support of HB 2007 HD1 Relating to the Local and Immigrant Farmer Education Program at the University of Hawaii, at Manoa, College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources.

I strongly support this bill provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities as indicated in the University's Board of Regents Approved Executive Biennium Budget. Let me state from the onset of this testimony that, as a member of the faculty at the University of Hawaii at Manoa, it is important to note that I support the prioritization process that the administration utilizes to establish their annual budgetary request to the legislature and can only advocate for additional funding of university programs if it does not negatively impact existing requests that are included in the executive budget.

**My name is Jari Sugano and I am a County Extension Agent and statewide program coordinator for the LIFE program at UH Manoa, College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources. Today, I am providing personal testimony.**

An increasing number of socially disadvantaged farmers are entering Hawaii's agriculture industry with little to no experience in commercial agriculture. They operate in rural and remote areas of Hawaii. They cultivate diverse and culturally important crops primarily for local food production. Ongoing educational support from the University of Hawaii at Manoa, College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (UH CTAHR), Cooperative Extension Service is essential for the sustainability of these under represented, developing agricultural areas due to their small acreage, remote locations, lack of access to farm resources, and limited English literacy.

This change in Hawaii's agriculture industry prompted a need for an educational program involving responsible and sustainable farming, business and risk management, and environmental protection stewardship. UH CTAHR developed a grass roots oriented program, Local and Immigrant Farmer Education Program (LIFE) in under serviced farming communities to assist these producers in dealing with the many facets of crop production. The LIFE program is a team of Cooperative Extension Service agents and specialists with an established network of government and industry partners.

LIFE has established a solid reputation for delivering timely, useful, hands-on, quality extension education to Hawaii's underserved and socially disadvantaged producers. These producers include limited resource growers, women, native Hawaiians, and socially disadvantaged agribusiness owners and farm workers. The LIFE Program is using the traditional extension model of "taking the university out to the people." The goal of the LIFE program is to: 1) increase the viability and sustainability of commercial

farms in Hawaii, 2) integrate more farmers into mainstream agriculture, and 3) help drive Hawaii's diversified industry forward.

Committed to the mission of the land grant university, LIFE strives to provide quality educational programs to ensure farmers in the targeted areas are sufficiently informed, have access to existing and emerging research based management tools, have ample opportunities to advance their knowledgebase and competencies so they can correctly choose and utilize specific technology and practices best suited to meet their diverse educational needs.

LIFE's extension educational programs are responsive to their clientele's identified, immediate and long-term educational needs. A needs assessment study was utilized to identify the present and future needs of LIFE's clientele base. LIFE continues to discover new ways in attracting, promoting and educating growers to attend extension educational events; advance timeliness and delivery of relevant, research-based information; and enhance clients' relationships and satisfaction with UH CTAHR and other government programs through identification of high priority areas.

*The top four areas of priority for statewide LIFE cooperators were: 1) suppression and management of insect and disease pests; 2) crop nutrition and fertilization; 3) marketing and adding value; and 4) new varieties, crops and products.*

Growers reinforced their preference for face-to-face interaction and indicated they would like to see more field day opportunities. LIFE understands that the economic success of agricultural producers relies on the growers' ability to adapt farming principles and practices to integrate the latest technology and research developments. LIFE establishes critical on-farm field experiments and workshops in conjunction with growers to tackle pressing crop production issues that strive to improve productivity and profitability. A few examples would include: pesticide safety, spray calibration, crop protection rotational programs, risk management, food safety, spray coverage, perpetuation of taro, integrated pest management, sustainable and organic farming, and variety trials to overcome new and challenging pests, organic cultivation, marketing, and adding value. Field day activities using the hands-on teaching demonstration method enables growers to see the impact of LIFE's recommendations first hand. We also believe repetition and continuous reinforcement of previous topics is important because of language difficulty and for information retention.

Many of our farmers prefer a one-on-one or close-knit small group learning environment because they are easily intimidated by government agencies and shy to discuss their problems in front of others. Establishment of a non-threatening environment is very critical to farmers with limited English proficiency.

For many new immigrant farmers in Hawaii, the agriculture business is a family business. First generation farmers appreciate the value of education and often have children (second generation children) who are educated and involved with the family business. In Hawaii, these children have a strong influence on decisions made on the farm and



effectively communicate with extension personnel. LIFE works with multi-generational agricultural families and agricultural businesses that employ immigrant farmers to increase the advancement and adoption of new technology and best management practices.

The Farm Doctor program is the core program for the LIFE program. Field visitations to commercial agricultural operations are conducted on an ongoing basis to provide crop production consultation support. Through farm visitations, we work with growers in conducting a 'farm checkup' to ensure farms are in good diagnostic order. We strive to develop a strong, trusting working relationship with growers to address priority issues and develop appropriate solutions to meet their needs. Bilingual material filled with color photographs and terminologies in lay-terms are used in conjunction with translators to support field visitations and educational events.

Our ability to provide service to rural, socially disadvantaged, underserved, and limited resource producers of Hawaii is largely due to a team-based and grass-roots approach to providing extension education through collaborative partnerships and on-farm relationships. Its team-based approach includes collaborative partnerships with CTAHR programs (Risk Management Hawaii, Sustainable and Organic Agriculture Program, Aquaponics and Hydroponics Program, Sustainable Pest Management Program, , Ag Incubator Program, Basil Swat Team, Go Farm Hawaii, Hawai'i Tea Program, High Value Vaccinium Project, Honeybee Program, etc.), statewide Extension agents, UHM John A. Burns School of Medicine, agricultural agencies such as USDA (FSA, NRCS, etc.), Hawai'i Department of Agriculture, Hawai'i Department of Health, county agencies, Hawai'i Farm Bureau, Hawai'i Papaya Industry Association, Kau and Palehua coffee cooperative, Pacific Gateway Center, Oahu RC&D, Ag Foundation, other public and private organizations and Hawaii's growers.

These partnerships enable LIFE to educate growers about a wide spectrum of priority agricultural topics while providing opportunities for growers to meet and take advantage of available government programs in a safe and conducive learning environment. Our long term goal is to assist growers in becoming self-directed, active information seekers and adopters of new research based agricultural advances.

HB 2007 HD1 would provide program support to sustain the LIFE program activities, which have perhaps never been more important than today. Currently food security, self-sufficiency and safety are paramount concerns, Regulatory costs and requirements pose serious difficulties for all Hawai'i farmers, and particularly the disadvantaged and often struggling segments of our diversified, small-farm agricultural community served by LIFE. Continued access to farm resources and educational support services in remote areas across the state would help advance the sustainability of Hawaii's diversified agricultural sector.

**I believe that bill HB 2007 HD1 has much merit. I strongly recommend that it be funded. Ongoing funding to support the LIFE program at CTAHR is crucial to the**

**sustainability of Hawaii's diversified agriculture. Thank you for the opportunity to express our strong support for HB 2007 HD1.**