

February 19, 2014

Chairman David Ige
Vice Chairman Michelle Kidani
Members of the Senate Ways and Means Committee



'IMILOA
Astronomy Center of Hawai'i

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Re: SB 3093 Relating to the University of Hawai'i at Hilo
Letter of Support

Aloha kākou Chairman Ige, Vice Chairman Kidani, and Members of the Senate Ways and Means Committee,

I am writing this letter in support of SB 3093 and the relationship between the RISE After School Program and the 'Imiloa Astronomy Center.

Since opening in 2006, the 'Imiloa Astronomy Center of Hawai'i – University of Hawai'i at Hilo - has emerged as a major new cultural institution serving the Island of Hawai'i and the world beyond. 'Imiloa is a popular success, serving over 100,000 visitors each year, as well as a major education asset for the Island.

'Imiloa's mission is to honor Maunakea by sharing the culture and science of the mountain to inspire generations.

Science and culture united provides a powerful and inspiring story, and it would be hard to imagine anywhere in the world better suited to tell that story than on the Island of Hawai'i, at the University of Hawai'i at Hilo where world-class science coexists with a rich and remarkable indigenous culture. 'Imiloa not only serves as an educational outreach to the general community, but it more importantly serves as a connector and pipeline for K-12 student and teacher engagement with higher educational resources and opportunities.

At the same time, 'Imiloa today remains a work in progress. Recognizing that 'Imiloa has yet to achieve its full potential, the leadership and staff are cultivating community partnerships that targets greater engagement by Hawai'i Island youth with the resources of the University of Hawai'i. The partnership that we've cultivated with the RISE program directly relates to our priority of serving as a pipeline to higher education. The 'Imiloa Astronomy Center would serve as a bridge between the University of Hawai'i at Hilo and start with the youth of Keaukaha and Pana'ewa through the RISE program and its efforts by creating mentorship opportunities, project based learning activities, and also peer mentoring opportunities between youth groups of the Island. We eventually would like to be able to grow this program to expand throughout the island, and potentially the state.

Therefore, we humbly ask for your support for SB3093 provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities in our BOR approved budget.

Mahalo nui for your consideration,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ka'iu Kimura".

Ka'iu Kimura
Executive Director