



# UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

## Legislative Testimony

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Written Testimony Presented Before the  
House Committee on Higher Education  
Thursday, February 12, 2015 at 2:03 pm

By

Robert Bley-Vroman, Chancellor

And

Maria Gallo, Dean

And

J. Kenneth Grace, Associate Dean

College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources

University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

### HB 1039 – MAKING AN APPROPRIATION FOR THE LOCAL AND IMMIGRANT FARMER EDUCATION PROGRAM

Chair Choy, Vice Chair Ichiyama, and members of the House Committee on Higher Education, thank you for this opportunity to testify in support, of HB 1039, which makes an appropriation for the Local and Immigrant Farmer Education Program.

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 1039 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.

**DAVID Y. IGE**  
Governor

**SHAN S. TSUTSUI**  
Lt. Governor



**SCOTT E. ENRIGHT**  
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

**PHYLLIS SHIMABUKURO-GEISER**  
Deputy to the Chairperson

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**TESTIMONY OF SCOTT E. ENRIGHT**  
**CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE**

**BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION**

February 12, 2015  
2:03 P.M.  
CONFERENCE ROOM 309

**HOUSE BILL NO. 1039**  
**MAKING AN APPROPRIATION FOR THE LOCAL AND IMMIGRANT FARMER**  
**EDUCATION PROGRAM**

Chairperson Choy and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 1039. This bill appropriates money to the Local and Immigrant Farmer Education (LIFE) Program of the UH College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources Cooperative Extension Service to support the growth and sustainability of the agriculture industry. The Department supports this measure provided it does not adversely affect the priorities within the Administration's budget.

The Department is very much aware of the need for a larger agricultural workforce. The 2012 US Agricultural Census has illustrated the trend of the graying of our agricultural workforce that now has an average age of over 63 years old. There is a dire need to attract new farmers to take up the reins in the agricultural industry. The LIFE Program is one such program with one of its goals being to integrate more farmers into mainstream agriculture.

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony.



**ichiyama2-Brandon**

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**From:** mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 10, 2015 2:12 PM  
**To:** HEDtestimony  
**Cc:** ashman.janet@gmail.com  
**Subject:** Submitted testimony for HB1039 on Feb 12, 2015 14:03PM

**HB1039**

Submitted on: 2/10/2015

Testimony for HED on Feb 12, 2015 14:03PM in Conference Room 309

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
J. Ashman	Individual	Support	No

Comments: Please support the growth and viability of local farms by giving them the assistance they need. Thank you.

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**ichiyama2-Brandon**

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**Sent:** Wednesday, February 11, 2015 1:14 PM  
**To:** HEDtestimony  
**Cc:** papayas@aloha.net  
**Subject:** \*Submitted testimony for HB1039 on Feb 12, 2015 14:03PM\*

**HB1039**

Submitted on: 2/11/2015

Testimony for HED on Feb 12, 2015 14:03PM in Conference Room 309

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Karen	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

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## HB 1039 relating to LIFE

Hawaii's agriculture has long depended upon laborers from other countries who are seeking better lives for their families. Many of us are here in this wonderful state as descendants of plantation workers. While the business and technology of agricultural practices have evolved in the past century since sugarcane was first cultivated here, we still rely on the able hands and strong backs of good people who are willing to do the hard work required in raising our food. Some of them speak English as a second language but with limited or no reading and writing proficiency. Others grew up in Hawaii or other states and did not do well in formal education settings perhaps due to undiagnosed learning disabilities and also have limited or no proficiency in written English. However, this does not reflect on their intelligence, since many may be well-educated in their countries of origin and also have a high aptitude in (or the specialized skill set required for) farming and ranching. The Local and Immigrant Farmer Program (LIFE) serves Hawaii's local and socially disadvantaged producers, including limited resource growers, women, native Hawaiians, and farm workers entering Hawaii for the first time. This program targets both past participants and new growers, providing hands-on training and educational sessions on farm and food safety, best management practices, and resources available for problem-solving. Launching and sustaining small farms is critical for Hawaii to achieve food self-sufficiency. Ensuring that the farmers and workers are implementing safe management practices (proper fertilizer and pesticide application, sustainable cultural practices) reduces the risk to those on the farm, in surrounding residential areas, and to our precious natural resources while providing food that is safe to consume. I ask for your support of HB 1039 relating to appropriations to support the LIFE program, which is critical to our quality of life in Hawaii.

Ruth Niino-DuPonte

Email [rnduponte07@gmail.com](mailto:rnduponte07@gmail.com)

**ichiyama2-Brandon**

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**From:** mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
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**To:** HEDtestimony  
**Cc:** gr82bfrienz@aol.com  
**Subject:** Submitted testimony for HB1039 on Feb 12, 2015 14:03PM

**HB1039**

Submitted on: 2/11/2015

Testimony for HED on Feb 12, 2015 14:03PM in Conference Room 309

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Kelvin Sewake	Individual	Support	No

Comments: Aloha! My name is Kelvin Sewake and I have been a County Extension Agent with the University of Hawaii at Manoa's CTAHR for almost 30 years now. I am testifying in strong support of CTAHR's LIFE program. I am testifying personally as a private citizen and not representing UH, provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities as indicated in the University's Board of Regents Approved Executive Biennium Budget. Extension Agents are the critical link between researchers and farmers providing research-based information through effective educational programs tailored to their specific clientele. The LIFE Program has a proven track record of many accomplishments carried out by extremely capable and dedicated Extension Agents who collaborate with industry organizations and with individual farmers in conducting needs assessments to develop a wide range of educational programs. Under the LIFE program, Extension Agents assist farmers in many aspects of farming such as optimum production practices, pest and invasive species management, pesticide usage and safety, soil fertility, postharvest handling, food safety, and much more. The LIFE program helps Hawaii's farmers by providing sound information to reduce the many risks and challenges that they face, thereby ensuring steady growth in Hawaii's agricultural industry. Please support CTAHR's LIFE Program as this program is critically needed in assisting the hard-working and dedicated farmers of Hawaii. Mahalo!

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**ichiyama2-Brandon**

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**To:** HEDtestimony  
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<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Ross Sibucac	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

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## ichiyama2-Brandon

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**To:** HEDtestimony  
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### **HB1039**

Submitted on: 2/10/2015

Testimony for HED on Feb 12, 2015 14:03PM in Conference Room 309

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Jari S.K. Sugano	Individual	Support	No

Comments: HB 1039: FUNDING OF THE LIFE PROGRAM, UH CTAHR Chair Choy, Vice Chair Ichiyama and members of the House Higher Education Committee, I thank you for this opportunity to provide my personal testimony in support of HB1039 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. 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. 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. You will rarely see LIFE cooperators at the capitol or written testimony from our clientele. Our clientele reside in rural, underserved, and limited resource areas of Hawaii. We service our clientele through a team-based and grass-roots approach 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. HB1039 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 1039 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 1039.

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**LATE**

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February 12, 2015

HEARING BEFORE THE  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

TESTIMONY ON HB 1039  
MAKING AN APPROPRIATION FOR THE LOCAL AND IMMIGRANT FARMER  
EDUCATION PROGRAM

Room 309  
2:03 PM

Aloha Chair Choy, Vice Chair Ichiyama, and Members of the Committee:

I am Christopher Manfredi, President of the Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation (HFB). Organized since 1948, the HFBF is comprised of 1,932 farm family members statewide, and serves as Hawaii's voice of agriculture to protect, advocate and advance the social, economic and educational interests of our diverse agricultural community.

**HFB strongly supports HB 1039**, which appropriates moneys to the Local and Immigrant Farmer Education Program of the UH College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources Cooperative Extension Service to support the growth and sustainability of the agriculture industry.

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 dependent on 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 we urged you to pass this bill.

**ichiyama2-Brandon**

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**From:** mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
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**HB1039**

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<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Shinichi Ichimaru	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

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