



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committees on Higher Education and
Agriculture and Environment
Monday, March 20, 2017 at 1:45 p.m.

By
Maenette Benham, Chancellor
University of Hawai'i – West O'ahu

HB 1279 HD1 – RELATING TO AGRICULTURAL FOOD PRODUCTION

Chairs Kahele and Gabbard, Vice Chairs Kidani and Riviere, and members of the committees:

The University of Hawai'i – West O'ahu (UHWO) supports HB 1279 HD1, which would appropriate funds to expand the existing educational programming in Sustainable Community Food Systems (SCFS) at UHWO in order to increase food security, self-sufficiency, economic development and food system resiliency in the State of Hawai'i.

The pressing social and ecological issues facing food systems today are complex and interrelated, defying single disciplinary solutions. Systematically advancing the goals of food security, resiliency and equity in Hawai'i will require educating new generations of food system professionals to think across traditional disciplinary boundaries to actively engage real-world challenges. The Sustainable Community Food System Program at UHWO provides a rich experiential, applied and multi-disciplinary undergraduate education that develops student comprehension of interrelated ecological and social issues in agriculture such that they may begin formulating meaningful responses to these challenges. Through a holistic study of the food system, the SCFS degree aims to develop highly skilled and civic-minded graduates prepared to advance the sustainable food and agriculture sector through new businesses and social enterprises, and preparing students for graduate-level training in disciplines such as Education, Hawaiian Studies, Natural Resource Management, Political Science or Urban and Regional Planning at UH Mānoa.

UHWO supports the following provisions of Section 2 of HB1279, HD1:

- 1. Establishing scholarships for students to enroll in the Sustainable Community Food Systems program at the University of Hawai'i, West O'ahu.** The BAS-SCFS at UHWO will provide a world-class education to the historically underserved Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander population of West O'ahu. The SCFS program is designed to serve the NHPI population through the integrative study of traditional ecological knowledge and modern science with the objective of stewarding the agricultural resources of Hawai'i over the long-term. A scholarship program for

SCFS will help assist adult learners in West O'ahu to access culturally relevant options in higher education while meeting state priorities.

- 2. Creating job opportunities and on-site training by creating positions for a full-time garden manager and part-time student assistants for the Student Organic Garden at the University of Hawai'i, West O'ahu.** The Student Organic Garden has grown to be a popular and dynamic living laboratory for the entire UHWO campus. Classes in SCFS, Mathematics, Political Science, Education and Hawaiian and Pacific Studies now regularly use the garden for experiential and hands-on learning. The garden serves hundreds of undergraduate and public school students each year. A permanent full-time garden manager position and part-time student employee positions for the garden will enable UHWO to continue to offer a wide range of high quality educational programming in sustainable horticulture, home gardening, cooking and nutrition.
- 3. Creating a Hawaiian Center for Sustainable Community Food Systems, a two hundred-acre education, training, outreach, food processing, and applied research center; provided that prior to creating and implementing the center the University of Hawai'i, West O'ahu, shall conduct and submit to the legislature a study that determines the feasibility and benefits of creating a center.** UHWO will conduct and submit to the legislature a study that determines the feasibility and benefits of creating a Hawaiian Center for Sustainable Community Food Systems (HCSCFS), a 200-acre multi-disciplinary and applied education center dedicated to advancing food security and sustainable economic development of the food system of Hawai'i and the Pacific. Through multiple program areas including certified organic production, youth leadership training, undergraduate and graduate education, organic farmer training, K-12 education, public workshops, food processing and applied agro-ecology research, the HCSCFS will provide the necessary educational and physical infrastructure to achieve a more sustainable, resilient and secure food system for the State of Hawai'i.
- 4. Implementing research projects, hosting conferences, and employing additional staff and faculty as the director of the program deems necessary.** To build upon prior success, the SCFS program is seeking additional funding to support applied agro-ecology and food system research, promote popular understanding of critical agriculture and food issues through public education, and build the SCFS program curriculum in the fields of indigenous natural resources management and epidemiology, public health and nutrition through the hiring of additional faculty members.

On behalf of the University of Hawai'i – West O'ahu, we thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony in support of HB 1279 HD1.

DAVID Y. IGE
Governor

SHAN S. TSUTSUI
Lt. Governor



State of Hawaii
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SCOTT E. ENRIGHT
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

PHYLLIS SHIMABUKURO-GEISER
Deputy to the Chairperson

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

**BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEES ON HIGHER EDUCATION & AGRICULTURE
& ENVIRONMENT**

**MARCH 20, 2017
1:45 P.M.
CONFERENCE ROOM 224**

**HOUSE BILL NO. 1279 HD1
RELATING TO AGRICULTURAL FOOD PRODUCTION**

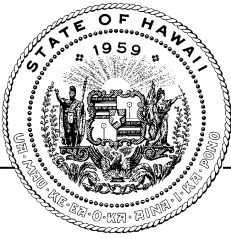
Chairpersons Kahele and Gabbard and Members of the Committees:

Thank for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 1279 HD1, which appropriates funds for the University of Hawaii, West Oahu, to expand its existing programs and develop new means to increase food security and self-sufficiency in the State. The department supports this bill.

The Department supports this measure as it looks to increase agricultural education at the University of Hawaii. Recent numbers from the 2012 US Agricultural Census has found the average age of farmers in Hawaii is over 63 years old. It is the Department's goal to reverse this trend by continuing to work with our state partners to encourage a new generation of agriculturalists dedicated to improving Hawaii's food security and self-sufficiency.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.





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DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR

LEO R. ASUNCION
DIRECTOR
OFFICE OF PLANNING

Statement of
LEO R. ASUNCION
Director, Office of Planning
before the
**SENATE COMMITTEES ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND AGRICULTURE AND
ENVIRONMENT**

Monday, March 20, 2017
1:45 PM

State Capitol, Conference Room 224

in consideration of
HB 1279, HD1
RELATING TO AGRICULTURAL FOOD PRODUCTION.

Chairs Kahele and Gabbard, Vice Chairs Kidani and Riviere, and Members of the Senate Committees on Higher Education, and Agriculture and Environment.

The Office of Planning (OP) supports the intent of HB1279, HD1, however, we prefer the language provided in SB 1313, SD1.

HB1279, HD1 proposes to improve food security and self-sufficiency in the State by encouraging the development and expansion of higher education focused on sustainable food systems. The measure appropriates funds for the University of Hawaii, West Oahu, to expand its existing programs and develop new means to increase food security and self-sufficiency in the State.

However, SB1313, SD1 takes a broader view of food security and self-sufficiency in the state by requiring the Department of Agriculture (DOA) to establish a strategy and goals for increase food security and self-sufficiency in line with recommendations of the *2012 Increased Food Security and Food Self-Sufficiency Strategy* (Strategy). SB1313, SD1 appropriates funds to assist the DOA to produce project promotional material along with other endeavors; expands and improve branding and labeling program for locally grown food; promote farmers markets; a farm to school pilot program in charter schools of the state; develop good agricultural practices for school gardens; establishment of specialists to certify farm food safety; develop regional agriculture infrastructure master plans; restore positions in food inspection, pest control, and biosecurity; restore positions in market research and agricultural statistics. Funding would also assist the University of Hawaii to provide funding for research, training, and education on agricultural food development and food security.

The efforts of SB 1313, SD1 work toward implementing the strategic objectives of the three strategic objectives of the Strategy: (1) Increasing demand for and access to locally grown

foods; (2) Increasing production of locally grown foods; and (3) Providing policy and organizational support to meet food self-sufficiency needs. OP agrees with the importance of promoting an understanding of sustainable food production and training a new generation of students for jobs in the sustainable food and agriculture sector in meeting the strategic objectives of the Increased Food Security and Food Self-Sufficiency Strategy.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this matter.



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March 20, 2017

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

TESTIMONY ON HB 1279, HD1
RELATING TO AGRICULTURAL FOOD PRODUCTION

Room 224
1:45 PM

Aloha Chairs Kahele and Gabbard, Vice Chairs Kidani and Riviere, and Members of the Committees:

I am Randy Cabral, President of the Hawaii Farm Bureau (HFB). Organized since 1948, the HFB is comprised of 1,900 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 understands the intent of this measure to expand food security and self sufficiency but has the following comments.

The ability to move the needle on agricultural production is dependent upon a diversity in agriculture. All kinds of agriculture meeting consumer demand based on preference, pricing, convenience and other factors are important so we can be competitive in the marketplace.

HFB supports the Office of State Planning position of advancing SB 1313 as it provides a comprehensive program including all aspects of the value chain. We agree that all of the strategic objectives, 1) increasing demand 2) increasing production and 3) providing support are critical to reaching the goals of our State Policy of Food Security and Food Self Sufficiency.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide our opinion on this matter.

Board Members

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Managing Partner,
Commercial & Business Lending

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Hawai'i Civil Rights Commission

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HACBED Staff

Brent N. Kakesako
Executive Director

Keoki Noji
Chief Operating Officer

Athena T. Esene
Bookkeeper & Office Manager

Malachi Krishok
Program Coordinator

Will Simmons
AmeriCorps VISTA

Avenaeo Galeai
Bookkeeping Intern

Foley Pfalzgraf
AmeriCorps VISTA

Date: March 16, 2017

To: Senator Kaiiali'i Kahele, Chair; Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Vice Chair, and members of the Committee on Higher Education; and Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair; Senator Gil Riviere, Vice Chair; and members of the Committee on Agriculture and Environment

From: Brent Kakesako, Hawai'i Alliance for Community-Based Economic Development (HACBED)

Re: Support for HB1279 HD1

Aloha Chairs Kahele and Gabbard, Vice Chairs Kidani and Riviere, and Committee Members,

The Hawai'i Alliance for Community-Based Economic Development (HACBED) supports HB1279 HD1, which would appropriate funds for the University of Hawai'i West O'ahu (UHWO) to expand its existing programs and develop new means to increase food security and self-sufficiency in the State.

HACBED was established in 1992 as a nonprofit statewide intermediary to *address social, economic, and environmental justice concerns through community-based economic development*. It advances its mission with core competencies in the areas of community and organizational capacity building, community and economic development planning, and asset policy development and advocacy. Over time in the communities we are fortunate to support, we have witnessed the importance of choice and control in the lives of families across the state to achieve their vision for genuine wealth. Specifically within the context of food, this is especially true. Over the past three years, HACBED has supported a network of community-based organizations to continue the work of restoring ancestral abundance. Partially due to community engagement and demand, this loose network came to focus its efforts on empowering institutions and systems tied to food and knowledge production.

A key part of that work was supporting the burgeoning Bachelor of Applied Science (BAS) in Sustainable Community Food Systems (SCFS) at UHWO, "a multi-disciplinary, experiential and applied education program about key ecological and social issues in food and agricultural systems."¹ The SCFS degree was born out of community-based organizations, such as MA'O Organic Farms, who saw the need for pathways of education, knowledge, and skills that were relevant to their communities—especially their youth. The BAS reflects this desire and need while meeting current shifts in workforce development. For example, the program's curriculum and goals align with the new Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, as it "incorporates problem-based and hands-on learning to develop food system professional capable of solving real-world

¹ <http://www.uhwo.hawaii.edu/academics/degrees-and-certificates/bachelor-of-applied-sciences/food-systems/>

problems and transitioning Hawai'i agriculture toward greater ecological sustainability and social equity.”²

In reaching out to teachers and students in the natural resources and agriculture academies within the public high schools in UHWO's service area, including Nānākuli, Wai'anae, Kapolei, Campbell, Leilehua, Waialua, and Kahuku, HACBED received resounding support for the program and its alignment with the interests of the students in those regions. Most impactful were students voicing their desires to return to their communities, hoping to support and improve them. And yet, we also learned of time and resource constraints on teachers, in addition to a lack of support, training, and mentoring necessary to incorporate food self-sufficiency concepts into their courses. Given the extensive community feedback we have collected, much of this network's previous efforts could potentially fulfill large parts of the feasibility and benefits study, added as an amendment to HB1279 by the Committee on Higher Education.

Passage of HB1279 HD1 would support an institution of higher learning within a community that desires and is prepared for innovative educational offerings. Students, teachers, and communities wish to alleviate broader issues of food security and self-sufficiency. With the passage of this measure, UHWO can continue to address these community needs, offering the following opportunities as a systemic approach to shifting our response and actions:

- *Scholarships* – support for students to enroll at UHWO and further their knowledge of sustainable food systems;
- *Research Support* – support for staff and faculty to broaden their knowledge and that of UHWO, and by extension the students;
- *Gatherings* – support for the community to learn alongside the faculty and students of UHWO;
- *Jobs & On-Site Training* – support for students to have paid, hands-on opportunities to apply their knowledge;
- *Center for Sustainable Food Systems* – 200-acre center that would provide education, training, outreach, food processing, and applied research capabilities and support for stakeholders across the food system.

Increasing the ability of families to grow their own food, as well as other measures to increase food security and self-sufficiency in Hawai'i, begins with a skilled, educated, and driven community workforce. UHWO's programs will build individual and community self-sufficiency, by extension improving the self-sufficiency and food security of the entire State. As such, measures proposed in HB1279 HD1 are crucial to addressing the systemic challenges facing individuals and families statewide.

Please let me know if you may have any additional questions at (808) 550-2661 or bkakesako@hacbed.org.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify,

Brent N. Kakesako
Executive Director

² Ibid.

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Friday, March 17, 2017 10:04 AM
To: HRE Testimony
Cc: tasia@maoorganicfarms.org
Subject: Submitted testimony for HB1279 on Mar 20, 2017 13:45PM

HB1279

Submitted on: 3/17/2017

Testimony for HRE/AEN on Mar 20, 2017 13:45PM in Conference Room 224

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
tasia yamamura	Individual	Support	No

Comments: Aloha mai- I am submitting testimony in support of House Bill 1279. In the face of the rising temperatures, unpredictable weather, etc that climate change threatens, we need to move towards a more self-sufficient food system. As many of us have heard, we currently import over 90% of the food we consume. Relying this heavily on outside sources for something as necessary as food is mind-boggling. Let us continue to expand support and resources for initiatives that support the growing of food and farmers who will feed our communities. Mahalo nui for taking my testimony into consideration.

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.

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March 15, 2017

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB1279 HD1
Hearing: 3/20/2017 @ 1:45pm, Room 224

Aloha Chairs Kahele & Gabbard, Vice Chairs Kidani & Riviere and Member of the Committees,

I have been a primary care pediatrician for over 35 years. One of the main areas of my clinical practice is prevention. Whether it be immunizations, screening tests, well child checks or parent health education; I need to be ever vigilant in order to keep the children in my care healthy and safe.

Over time, I have realized that healthcare is more than just giving out pills, it is about providing training and jobs and sustaining food and culture. I support HB1279 HD1, because it deals with prevention. Prevention of a possible critical state-wide disaster if Hawaii is unable to import food.

We need to act now. We need to grow more of our own food. And, we need to train the younger generation on the most up-to-date methods of farming our food. This will create food sustainability through growing our own, from the community for the community.

I strongly support HB1279 HD1 because it will help to ensure a healthy future not only for Hawaii's Keiki today, but for future generations.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Ricardo C. Custodio, MD, MPH
Pediatrician, Kalihi-Palama Health Center
Associate Professor of Health Sciences, UH West Oahu