

**LATE**



KAMEHAMEHA SCHOOLS®

Senate Committees on Higher Education and Agriculture and Environment

Time: 1:45 p.m.  
Date: March 20, 2017  
Where: State Capitol Room 224

TESTIMONY

By Kamuela Cobb-Adams  
Kamehameha Schools

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

RE: **HB 1279 HD1, Relating to Agricultural Food Production**

Aloha mai kākou! My name is Kamuela Cobb-Adams and I serve as the O‘ahu Senior Director for the Community Engagement and Resources Group at Kamehameha Schools.

We are writing to **support HB 1279 HD1**, relating to Agricultural Food Production, which 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 within the State and appropriating funds to achieve that objective.

We believe this measure is an important step to increasing our agricultural production in Hawai‘i. Food security and self-sufficiency is essential to the well-being of Hawai‘i, and this measure will allow for educational opportunities to expand Hawai‘i’s sustainable agricultural food production. These opportunities in higher education are crucial to ensure that Hawai‘i has a sustainable community food system in the future; therefore, Kamehameha Schools supports this measure.

Founded in 1887, Kamehameha Schools is an organization striving to advance a thriving Lāhui where all Native Hawaiians are successful, grounded in traditional values, and leading in the local and global communities. We believe that community success is individual success, Hawaiian culture-based education leads to academic success and local leadership drives global leadership.

‘A‘ohe hana nui ke alu ‘ia. No task is too large when we all work together! Mahalo nui.

**LATE**

TESTIMONY OF GARY MAUNAKEA-FORTH  
House Committee on Higher Education  
HB 1279 – Relating to Agricultural Food Production  
Hawai`i State Legislature

March 19, 2017

Aloha

My name is Gary Maunakea-Forth, I live and work in the Wai`anae moku, I am the co-founder of, and current Managing Director for MA`O Organic Farms. I have worked in this role for the past 16-years.

MA`O is a social enterprise, structured as a non-profit 501(c)3, our mission is to grow new leaders/entrepreneurs through a college-career educational pathway and via work/management on our 24-acre certified organic farm.

I am writing to support HB 1279, which would appropriate funds to expand the newly established University of Hawai`i at West O`ahu Bachelor of Applied Science in Sustainable Community Food Systems (UHWO SCFS). I am sure others from education will make convincing statements regarding education; hence I want to contribute two comments on the future of agriculture in Hawai`i.

- (1) The State's own studies show we grow less than 15% of our own food and have less than 14-days supply of food on island at any one time. The Office of Planning, in an EDA funded 2012 report, stated that: "Replacing just 10% of the food we currently import would amount to approximately \$313 million. Assuming a 30% farm share, \$94 million would be realized at the farm-gate, which would generate an economy-wide impact of an additional \$188 million in sales, \$47 million in earnings, \$6 million in state tax revenues, and more than 2,300 jobs."

Currently MA`O produces 2-tons of certified organic food per week but we are unable to supply the local demand for locally produced organic foods. Conversations with other farmers suggest that they experience similar demand. Each Summer I visit organic farms in California's Central Valley. Organic food production has experienced massive growth there; corporate growers in Salinas Valley are now expanding only their organic acreage production, and it's well known in the industry that Salinas Valley might be entirely certified organic by 2030. Organic food production represents a massive opportunity to make Hawai`i more food sustainable, and to create new jobs and farm-gate revenues. This could be critical to Wai`anae, a region stricken with high rates of poverty and homelessness.

- (2) Even with the pressures of development there are valiant attempts to secure land and water for future agriculture production. However, the efforts to create a new cadre of farm leaders/entrepreneurs – educated food systems professionals that have practical skills – is fleeting at best. The UHWO SCFS program fills a huge systemic need within the sustainable

agriculture and food systems industries, by providing comprehensive applied interdisciplinary training.

California certified organic farm sales reached \$2.4 billion in 2015; this has largely been due to innovative programs like the University of California Santa Cruz's Center for Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems (UCSC CASFS). Over the past 50-years UCSC CASFS has supported research and education throughout the US; the program has trained thousands of people, and now over 250 graduates lead organic farm enterprises around the country. UHWO has been able to attract Dr. Albie Miles to run UHWO's SCFS program, he just happens to be a graduate and former leader of the UC Santa Cruz's CASFS program. His leadership greatly improves our overall capacity to train and empower a new cadre of entrepreneurial sustainable food systems professionals.

MA`O will continue to build a local education pipeline of Leeward youth from early education into college, and we will support our associate degree graduates as they matriculate to UHWO and the SCFS program. We ask you to strongly support HB 1279; it is a key investment for the future sustainability of these islands.

*Gary Maunakea-Forth*

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