



# UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

## Legislative Testimony

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Testimony Presented Before the  
House Committee on Education  
Wednesday, February 14, 2018 at 2:10 p.m.

By  
Nicholas Comerford  
Dean, College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources  
And  
Michael Bruno  
Interim Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs  
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

### HB 2025 – RELATING TO EDUCATION

Chair Woodson, Vice Chair Kong, and members of the House Committee on Education:

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 2025.

Composting is an environmentally safe and useful way to deal with the appropriate type of materials. The College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (CTAHR), University of Hawai'i at Mānoa (UHM) would be pleased to be part of the Composting Grant Pilot Project Working Group as outlined in the bill. CTAHR has useful experience in the science of composting, including training and demonstrations in composting at the UHM/CTAHR Urban Garden Center in Pearl City.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of HB 2025.

**HB-2025**

Submitted on: 2/13/2018 11:45:41 AM

Testimony for EDN on 2/14/2018 2:10:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
lindsey whitcomb	Windward Zero Waste Schools	Support	No

Comments:

Representatives of the EDN committee,

I am writing to express my support of HB2025, and would like to briefly describe my experience with a school composting/resource recovery operation as detailed in the bill. I represent the Windward Zero Waste Hui Schools, a partnership of Windward Oahu schools working cooperatively in the pursuit of waste reduction, soil restoration, and applied environmental education. All members participate annually in the U.S. EPA's Food Recovery Challenge and adhere to strict, safe, standardized operational procedures. Ka'ohao Public Charter School (formerly Lanikai Elementary), Ka'elepulu Elementary, and Kainalu Elementary make up our schools. Each school diverts many tons of noxious organic waste from the waste stream, creates innumerable cubic yards of soil rich in nutrients that retains moisture, mitigates erosion, increases biodiversity, sequesters carbon, grows great gardens, restores lawns, and teaches kids a lot about earth science. Schools make money selling their surplus compost. Plastic bag use is greatly reduced, dumpster volume is slashed, and dumpster stink – along with the flies, roaches, rats, and other pests attracted to stink – are noticeably fewer. Instead of being horrific trash factories, our schools lead the way in admirable sustainable practices that transfer into homes and neighborhoods. Ka'ohao was named #1 in the nation in the EPA Food Recovery Challenge for 2014-15. Data collected from the 2017 calendar year show that food waste recovery of the three Windward Zero Waste School Hui campuses topped out at 63,490 pounds, or 31.75 tons.

In addition to these qualities, kids at each of our schools participate in the food collection and data collection process- applied learning of math skills at its finest. They are engaged, enthusiastic, and proud of the work they are doing. And the dividends of the entire composting process provides rich soil that is used by the students in the school garden. Without prompting, teachers begin to take lessons outside of the classroom and into their garden plot- a welcome change for both the teachers and the students, especially ones who struggle with learning differences (Getting outside and playing in the dirt is the original Wiggle Seat).

This past fall, a group of Kailua Intermediate students won 1st place, nationally, for their work in investigating side effects of synthetic pesticides and subsequently their development of an organic pesticide replacement

(<http://kailuain.k12.hi.us/awards/awards.html>). They were graduates of the Zero Waste School Ka'ohao. These are the outcomes we look towards when we give appropriate sustainability models to our keiki and pair them with applied education.

I hope for your support in this bill. Mahalo for your consideration.

Lindsey Whitcomb

**HB-2025**

Submitted on: 2/13/2018 1:56:29 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/14/2018 2:10:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Melodie Aduja	OCC Legislative Priorities Committee of the Democratic Party of Hawaii	Support	No

Comments:

**HB-2025**

Submitted on: 2/12/2018 3:51:56 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/14/2018 2:10:00 PM

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

Comments:

**HB-2025**

Submitted on: 2/12/2018 8:04:42 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/14/2018 2:10:00 PM

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

Comments:



STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
P.O. BOX 2360  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96804

**LATE**

**Date:** 02/14/2018

**Time:** 02:10 PM

**Location:** 309

**Committee:** House Education

**Department:** Education

**Person Testifying:** Dr. Christina M. Kishimoto, Superintendent of Education

**Title of Bill:** HB 2025 RELATING TO RESOURCE RECOVERY.

**Purpose of Bill:** Authorizes the Department of Education to issue grants to establish a composting grant pilot project in Department of Education schools. Establishes a composting grant pilot project working group. Requires report to the Legislature. Appropriates funds.

**Department's Position:**

The Hawaii State Department of Education supports HB 2025, provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities as indicated in our Board of Education approved budget. While many schools already have composting projects with external funders or community support, grants may assist other schools in establishing a program.

The Hawaii State Department of Education seeks to advance the goals of the Strategic Plan which is focused on student success, staff success, and successful systems of support. This is achieved through targeted work around three impact strategies: school design, student voice, and teacher collaboration. Detailed information is available at [www.hawaiipublicschools.org](http://www.hawaiipublicschools.org).



Email: [communications@ulupono.com](mailto:communications@ulupono.com)

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION  
Wednesday, February 14, 2018 — 2:10 p.m. — Room 309

**Ulupono Initiative Strongly Supports HB 2025, Relating to Resource Recovery**

Dear Chair Woodson, Vice Chair Kong, and Members of the Committee:

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 produced food; increase affordable, clean, renewable energy; and better management of waste and fresh water. Ulupono believes that self-sufficiency is essential to our future prosperity and will help shape a future where economic progress and mission-focused impact can work hand in hand.

**Ulupono strongly supports HB 2025**, which authorizes the Department of Education to issue grants to establish a composting grant pilot project in schools, because it aligns with our goal of reducing waste in Hawai'i.

Composting is one of the best ways for people to reduce waste. In particular, schools generate tons of food waste and turning that material into usable compost can provide nutrients to farm to school programs. Furthermore, students are proactively learning to be more conscious about their waste production, identify science and agricultural concepts, and develop an understanding of where their fruits and vegetables come from.

As Hawai'i's waste issues become more complex and challenging, we appreciate this committee's efforts to look at policies that address these issues.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Respectfully,

Kyle Datta  
General Partner

*Investing in a Sustainable Hawai'i*





O'ahu  
Chapter

**LATE**

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**House Bill 2025: Relating to Composting**

In Strong Support

Hearing Date: Wednesday February 14<sup>th</sup> , 2018

Hearing Time: 2:10 PM

Place: Conference Room 309

Committee: Education

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Aloha Chair Woodson and members of the House Committee on Education,

I am writing on behalf of the Surfrider Foundation's Oahu Chapter in strong support of HB 2025 relating to composting pilot projects in the Department of Education (DOE).

One of Surfrider Oahu's most innovative and successful program is the Ocean Friendly Gardens (OFG) initiative and the Surfblitz program. Our members and volunteers have engaged in landscape revitalization by understanding the connection of health soils and at home food production to the future health of our nearshore ecosystems and oceans. In the past 3 years we have built more than 20 OFG's around Oahu following a program directive of CPR – Conservation, Permeability, and Retention. These concepts are the foundation of having healthy watersheds. In designing landscapes under this umbrella of sustainability we have come to realize the high value of composting to amend our soils. By transferring nutrients from our food waste to the soils we are creating a closed loop system in which natural processes are used to amend the soil that provides us food.

This program has engaged home owners, but because we are using the power of a volunteer network we are also engaging keiki in the program. At each of our garden builds we have workshops where the youth are engaged in the process of creating healthy soils, a living landscape, and a food sources at home. This early childhood education is a living laboratory with immense educational potential.

Already on Oahu, schools have shown a model of progress in diverting food waste into composting systems that are then in turn used to have mini-agriculture systems on campus. While traditional systems of classroom education still have a place, hands-on experience shows much higher learning retention and engagement possibilities. Farming and agricultural systems in particular have the potential to cross multiple disciplines of study in one living classroom. Students are connected to biology, botany, chemistry, mathematics, economics, engineering, resource management, cultural knowledge, and team work all in one space.

Our food waste problem is one that could be considered tragic considering the amount of people going without. Nearly 30% of all consumer food is wasted – going to landfills or incinerators which are not part of a closed loop that maximizes the potential for a regenerative economy.

This program would have the potential for the DOE to cut its disposal pickup frequency and tipping fees by 50%, resulting in an estimated 7-9 million fewer pounds of wet, organic waste and paper entering Hawaii's landfills and incinerator(s). Governor Ige, as well as the Aloha+ Challenge, have called for doubling local food production by 2020. For this to work, students have to be engaged early to learn about building soil through composting and utilizing organic resources. The Aloha+ Challenge calls for reducing the solid waste stream prior to disposal by 70 percent by 2030 through source reduction, recycling, bioconversion, and landfill diversion methods. This goal, signed by the Governor, four county Mayors, Office of Hawaiian Affairs, State Legislature, and Hawai'i Green Growth public-private partners across the state, has no hope of being achieved unless the largest sources of waste, like DOE, are addressed.

Surfrider is very excited about the possibilities of introducing these systems to schools. Healthy soils are great filters for stormwater runoff and a future generation versed in growing their own food will lead to a more stable economy with less reliance on imported materials.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rafael Bergstrom', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Rafael Bergstrom  
Oahu Chapter Coordinator, Surfrider Foundation

**LATE**

**HB-2025**

Submitted on: 2/13/2018 9:31:59 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/14/2018 2:10:00 PM

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

Comments:

- - - **The Windward Zero Waste Hui and the Kokua Hawaii Foundation have enabled schools to successfully demonstrate the enormous educational, environmental, and fiscal benefit to Hawaii through school composting initiatives.**
    - **The Department of Education would be able to drastically reduce its dumpster pickup and amend waste collection contracts if more schools participated in onsite composting.**
    - **School composting allows for real life application of numerous STEM concepts and educational learning standards.**
    - **School composting models have shown the most success when thoroughly managed and supported, which requires grant funding to hire support staff. Support staff are able to ensure proper management of compost operations, assist with student involvement and support learning objectives.**