

**LATE**

**SB-2075**

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<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Regina Gregory	EcoTipping Points Project	Support	No

Comments:

**LATE**

February 2, 2018

**SB2075-RELATING TO THE SUSTAINABLE AND ORGANIC AGRICULTURE PROGRAM.**

Chairs Gabbard & Kahele, Vice Chairs Riviere & Kim and members of the Senate Agriculture and Environment and Higher Education, thank you for this opportunity to provide my personal testimony in **strong support of SB 2075** relating to the Sustainable and Organic Agriculture Program (SOAP) 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 at UH Manoa, College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources. Today, I am providing personal testimony.**

Small acreage and family owned farms now account for majority of Hawaii's agriculture industry on Oahu. According to the 2012 Census of Agriculture, eighty-eight percent of farms in Hawaii are less than 50 acres in size, but only account for ten percent of the industry's sales. Public interest in commercial food production is on the rise with new statewide farmer education initiatives and sustainable 'grow more local food' promotions. Asian immigrants have also entered Hawaii's agriculture industry with little to no experience in sustainable crop production. Due to their remote locations, lack of trust in government programs, and need to stay close to their farming area, these under represented developing agricultural areas need more educational support from the University of Hawaii at Manoa, College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (UH CTAHR).

The Sustainable and Organic Agriculture Program (SOAP) at the University of Hawaii at Manoa, College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (UH CTAHR) remains committed to providing continuing education, in the form of agricultural professional conferences, growers workshops, field day activities, web based newsletters, applied field research in sustainable and organic agriculture, and in field technical support for agricultural professionals and producers across the state.

Agriculture in Hawaii that was once dominated by the sugar and pineapple industry has shifted towards a diversified agricultural system. Increased food self-sufficiency and security is a priority for our program, as well as our state, as we live in an island state

which relies on 85-90% of imports as its primary food source (State of Hawaii, Department of Business Economic Development and Tourism, 2012).

New pests and diseases continue to invade Hawaii's borders, regulations intensify, marketing issues become more complex, and growers are faced with new challenges that threaten the expansion and advancement of Hawaii's diversified agriculture sector. A change in Hawaii's agriculture industry has prompted a surge in request and for responsive, cooperative educational programs in sustainable and organic farming, marketing, pest management, risk management and environmental stewardship.

Awareness and adoption of sustainable agriculture practices is increasing within the State of Hawaii. The 2014 Organic Production Survey conducted by the USDA NASS provides additional evidence of grower adoption of sustainable agricultural production practices such as organic mulch/compost, green/animal manures, no-till or minimum till, maintained buffer strips, water management practices, biological pest management, maintaining beneficial insect or vertebrate habitat, selecting planting locations to avoid pests, releasing beneficial organisms, choosing pest resistant varieties, and planning plantings to avoid cross-contamination. Hawaii organic fruit and vegetable production is increasing in acreage and valued over \$12.1 million dollars compared to \$7.6 million in 2008. Hawaii's organic crop values are now higher than 14 other states in the continental USA. (Honolulu Star Advertiser, October 26, 2015)

The ability to continue and expand our applied research on farmland which includes CTAHR's certified organic lands, on farm field trials, and recruitment of field support positions are needed to fill immediate research and educational gaps and increase our ability to answer and respond to emerging and re-occurring issues in support of Hawaii's diversified agriculture industry.

**I believe that bill SB 2075 has much merit. I strongly recommend that it be funded. Ongoing funding to support at CTAHR is crucial to the sustainability of Hawaii's diversified agriculture. Thank you for the opportunity to express our strong support for SB 2075.**