

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment
Senate Committee on Higher Education
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By
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SB 2575 – RELATING TO AGRICULTURAL FOOD PRODUCTION

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

Mahalo for providing me an opportunity to share my testimony in support of the SB 2575 Bill.

As a western and Indigenous science trained professor working in and studying within the intersection of these two unique worldviews I have seldom come across courses let alone entire degree programs that focus on integrating Indigenous and Western scientific values. Rather, most science courses I have encountered focus on western science values, beliefs, and educational teachings. Within these courses little to no real time is ever spent on Indigenous science. What makes the SCFS program unique is how it has been developed to include Indigenous perspectives along side Western science. This intertwining of belief systems provides students with a set of diverse frames of reference to draw from when it comes to answering the multilevel complex questions that our world is faced with including but not limited to issues around global warming and food sustainability. It accomplishes this through inclusion of community, culture, individual students collective knowledge of science.

On a personal level, as a father of two young children I am continually questioning myself on if I am fulfilling my responsibility to this earth in order to make this a better place for my children and their children to come. I strongly believe this program, which teaches the importance of living sustainably across all spectrums of live is a start in this endeavor.

As an island community that once was able to sustain as many as 1 million people we are now dependent upon 90% of our goods and services being imported. We must continue to work towards making a change in the way we take care of the lands we have but also in the way we utilize our resources in more sustainable ways. I am proud to say that I live in Hawaii mainly because it is one of the few states that has taken a stance on sustainability issues and is moving towards making a difference not only for its own communities but also as a leader to the nation on the importance of moving forward. The SCFS program is part of making this change by providing students an opportunity to learn about how we can become more sustainable through the teachings of diverse perspectives in science.

Again, thank you for your time and the opportunity to testify in support of this important measure.