



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Written Testimony Presented to the
Senate Committee on Judiciary
Tuesday, February 25, 2020 at 12:15 p.m.
by
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SB 3059 – RELATING TO THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Keohokalole, and Members of the Committee:

The University of Hawai'i (UH) supports this measure would remove the sunset provision of Act 39, Session Laws of Hawai'i 2017, and thereby allow UH to sustain its Innovation and Commercialization Program by providing it with the express statutory authority to sponsor and directly participate in the transformation of innovations created by UH researchers into viable commercial enterprises.

Universities across the country increasingly recognize that they can play an active role to support the transformation of inventions and discoveries generated on their campuses and to transfer these technologies to the commercial realm. The University of Hawai'i needs to match its peers to remain competitive to attract sponsored research, enterprising faculty and talented students.

Commercial innovation is inherently risky and takes time to develop. The path leading from an idea, through its development and refinement, through protection of intellectual property, through formally organizing a corporate structure and hiring managers and staff, through locating a facility to physically incubate the venture, through obtaining external financing, and ultimately leading to a successful and sustainable commercial operation is fraught with uncertainty.

Act 39 recognizes that UH is uniquely positioned to assist a home-grown fledgling venture navigate these uncertainties. To sustain and grow its Innovation and Commercialization Program, the University of Hawai'i respectfully requests that the sunset provision of Act 39, Session Laws of Hawai'i 2017, be deleted.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



ELEMENTAL
EXCELERATOR



**Written Statement of Elemental Excelerator
before the Senate Committee on Judiciary
February 25, 2020**

**In consideration of SB 3059 SD 1
RELATING TO THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII**

Aloha Chair Rhoads, Vice-Chair Keohokalole, and Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary:

Elemental Excelerator **submits support of SB 3059 SD 1**, which repeals the sunset provision in Act 38, Session Laws of Hawaii 2017.

Elemental Excelerator is a Honolulu-based non-profit organization that supports climate positive startup companies that are helping solve Hawai'i's most urgent environmental problems. Our role is to accelerate cleantech startups by bringing forward important commercial inflection points through real-world demonstration projects and tailored business model impact. Each year, we select 15-20 companies annually that best fit our mission and fund each company up to \$1 million. To date, we have awarded \$36 million to 99 companies resulting in over fifty demonstration projects in Hawai'i & the Asia Pacific.

We support SB 3059 SD 1 because it will contribute to our state's efforts to diversify our economy and provide our next generation of Hawai'i residents with career opportunities in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics right at home. In our work, we have seen three widely recognized gaps in funding that test the survival of startups with capital-intensive solutions; technology, commercialization valleys of death, and market expansion. By passing SB 3059, the university can continue to attract outside investments in innovation from entities like the federal government, private, and philanthropic sponsors and solidifies the state's commitment to the long-term development of our entrepreneurial ecosystem.

Diversifying our economy requires collaborative efforts between the private, government, and educational sectors. We urge you to pass this bill and look forward to continuing working with the University of Hawai'i in realizing our innovation economy.

Sincerely,

Tiffany Huynh

Tiffany Huynh
Director of External Affairs