



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented to the
Senate Committee on Higher Education
Tuesday, February 9, 2021 at 3:10 p.m.

by

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SB 1219 – RELATING TO UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII RESEARCH

Chair Kim, Vice Chair Kidani, and members of the Committee:

The University of Hawai'i (UH) supports this measure that would remove the sunset provision of Act 39, Session Laws of Hawai'i (SLH) 2017. This law, currently codified in sections 1951 through 1959 of HRS Chapter 304A, provides UH with the express statutory authority to sponsor and directly participate in the transformation of innovations created by its researchers into viable commercial enterprises. Unless the sunset date is repealed, the authority is extinguished on June 30, 2021.

As our experience with the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrates, the state's economy is heavily dependent on a few sectors. As the state's only public system of higher education, UH plays a critical role in helping to diversify the economy by promoting research, discovery and commercial innovation. To remain competitive, it is imperative for UH to have a strong and comprehensive university level research program with the capacity to support commercial innovation.

The University of Hawai'i respectfully requests that the sunset provision of Act 39, SLH 2017, be repealed.



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Conference Room 229

SB 1219: RELATING TO THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII RESEARCH

Chair Kim, Vice Chair Kidani and Members of the Committee:

My name is Gary Kai and I am the Executive Director of the Hawaii Business Roundtable. The Hawaii Business Roundtable supports Senate Bill 1219 to allow the University to continue its work in research commercialization and economic development by removing the sunset provision in Act 39.

The Hawaii Business Roundtable strongly believes that a strong research and innovation sector led by the University of Hawaii will be a large and important magnet for new money and new fields of job growth in Hawai'i. We supported the Legislature in the creation of Act 39. We agree with the Legislature that the commercialization of the intellectual property created by basic and applied research conducted at the University of Hawaii, holds great promise to contribute to the creation of jobs and economic growth. It is a vital component of the creation of jobs in the local economies of many universities across the country and although it is in its early stages, it is being done here in Hawaii.

Commercialization of research is a long-term investment in Hawaii's future. As we have all seen it is not an overnight venture but develops slowly. As we recover from the economic impact of the pandemic, we must look forward to building a more diverse and resilient economy. We strongly believe that the research and commercialization efforts of the University are vital to that effort. We, therefore, fully support the request to delete the sunset provision of Act 39.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to testify.

Gary K. Kai, Executive Director
Hawaii Business Roundtable