



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Higher Education and Technology
Wednesday, February 16, 2022 at 2:00 p.m.

By
Nicholas Comerford, Dean
College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources
And
Michael Bruno, PhD
Provost
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

HB 1717 – RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Chair Takayama, Vice Chair Clark, and members of the House Committee on Higher Education and Technology:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of the intent of HB 1717 relating to establishing a foreign agriculture small equipment pilot program.

Hawai'i agriculture will benefit from the incorporation of smaller equipment that matches the limited acreage indicative of many farms in the state. CTAHR provides the following evaluation and comment to address the specific goals of HB 1717:

1. Identify and purchase foreign agricultural technology, including but not limited to small equipment tractors and retrofit engines, which will benefit the State's farmers and ranchers and comply with the Environmental Protection Agency's emission standards.

It is CTAHR's understanding that such equipment does not exist currently, which is the reason that such equipment is not currently in use. The expectation of what type of equipment to consider is quite open-ended, and the success of HB 1717 would benefit from a more specific charge.

2. Establish contact with manufacturers of small equipment in Japan and other countries.

This is certainly possible; in fact, CTAHR's Extension program has done some years ago in response to previously expressed interests. Contacts with manufacturers would have to be re-initiated.

3. Work with the United States Environmental Protection Agency to identify federal Environmental Protection Agency standard and compliance requirements for small foreign agricultural equipment.

From past experience, this would be necessary in order to import any equipment. One option that has not been considered, is for the state to pay one or more of these companies to retrofit equipment prior to exporting to Hawai'i and having it pre-approved for import. It would be a reasonable approach given the inventors of the equipment are the most knowledgeable.

4. Collaborate with agriculture and agricultural professionals from foreign countries on management practices.

Management practices using equipment is often well-known. We see this more along the lines of training for the use of equipment. See below for training issues.

5. Bring harvesting, weed management, and field preparation machinery into the State of Hawaii for evaluation.

This is consistent with #1 above.

6. Conduct on-farm trials to evaluate the efficacy and applicability to multiple growing systems (e.g. wetland conventional, organic, forage crops, etc.) statewide.

CTAHR assumes that this refers to how the new equipment is used in different systems.

7. Conduct education and training workshops statewide to update agriculture producers on available technology.

This is the mission of Cooperative Extension in CTAHR.

Limitations of HB 1717 in its current form and comments on changes:

1. CTAHR does not currently have the staff expertise to accomplish all of this, but that could be rectified with the appropriate budget.
2. The goals as stated will be a multi-year operation, and it is not clear if the plan and ability is to provide a multi-year budget. It would be helpful if that could be indicated in the bill.
3. The bill identifies CTAHR and mentions the inclusion of a community college, but does not identify the community college that has an appropriate program. It would be helpful if the bill was specific about the community college. That would

allow the community college to provide input to the bill's language and budget needs.

4. A budget is not proposed to accomplish those goals.

The goals outlined in this bill would require a budget that includes the following categories:

1. Adequate staff for a multi-year program in CTAHR and in the community college once the community college and its role are identified.
2. Significant funding for the purchase of equipment and its shipping to Hawai'i.
3. Significant funding for the retrofitting of the equipment either here or in the country of origin.
4. Travel funds (assuming COVID-19 does not become a limitation of travel) in order to find and evaluate the applicability of equipment in foreign countries.
5. Training for CTAHR personnel in the operation of the equipment, probably in the country of origin.
6. Funding for the community college that will participate in the program once their involvement is defined. A successful program would require that individuals receive training in the repair and maintenance of such equipment if it's distinctly different from what is currently available in Hawai'i.
7. Additional operating expenses necessary to meet this goal.

The University of Hawai'i supports the intent of HB 1717, but notes that there is much to be concerned with in its present form. In addition, we support this bill provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities as indicated in our BOR Approved Budget.

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR



CRAIG K. HIRAI
DIRECTOR

GLORIA CHANG
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT SYSTEM
HAWAII EMPLOYER-UNION HEALTH BENEFITS TRUST FUND
OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC DEFENDER

**STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE**

P.O. BOX 150
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96810-0150

ADMINISTRATIVE AND RESEARCH OFFICE
BUDGET, PROGRAM PLANNING AND
MANAGEMENT DIVISION
FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION DIVISION
OFFICE OF FEDERAL AWARDS MANAGEMENT (OFAM)

WRITTEN ONLY
TESTIMONY BY CRAIG K. HIRAI
DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE
TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION & TECHNOLOGY
ON
HOUSE BILL NO. 1717

**February 16, 2022
2:00 p.m.
Room 309 and Videoconference**

RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

The Department of Budget and Finance (B&F) offers comments on this bill.

House Bill No. 1717: appropriates an unspecified amount of general funds for FY 23 for the University of Hawai'i's College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources to establish the foreign agriculture small equipment pilot program; and requires a report to the Legislature.

B&F notes that, with respect to the general fund appropriation in this bill, the federal Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act requires that states receiving Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) II funds and Governor's Emergency Education Relief II funds must maintain state support for:

- Elementary and secondary education in FY 22 at least at the proportional level of the state's support for elementary and secondary education relative to the state's overall spending, averaged over FYs 17, 18 and 19; and
- Higher education in FY 22 at least at the proportional level of the state's support for higher education relative to the state's overall spending, averaged over FYs 17, 18 and 19.

Further, the federal American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act requires that states receiving ARP ESSER funds must maintain state support for:

- Elementary and secondary education in FY 22 and FY 23 at least at the proportional level of the state's support for elementary and secondary education relative to the state's overall spending, averaged over FYs 17, 18 and 19; and
- Higher education in FY 22 and FY 23 at least at the proportional level of the state's support for higher education relative to the state's overall spending, averaged over FYs 17, 18 and 19.

The U.S. Department of Education has issued rules governing how these maintenance of effort (MOE) requirements are to be administered. B&F will be working with the money committees of the Legislature to ensure that the State of Hawai'i complies with these ESSER MOE requirements.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments.

DAVID Y. IGE
Governor

JOSH GREEN
Lt. Governor



PHYLLIS SHIMABUKURO-GEISER
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

MORRIS M. ATTA
Deputy to the Chairperson

State of Hawaii
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
1428 South King Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96814-2512
Phone: (808) 973-9600 FAX: (808) 973-9613

TESTIMONY OF PHYLLIS SHIMABUKURO-GEISER

CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION & TECHNOLOGY

FEBRUARY 16, 2022
10:00 A.M.

CONFERENCE ROOM 309 & VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

HOUSE BILL NO. 1717
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Chairpersons Takayama and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 1717. The bill appropriates funds to the University of Hawaii to establish a foreign agriculture small equipment pilot program and requires a report to the Legislature. Diversified agriculture in Hawaii could benefit from a small equipment pilot program that would be appropriate for the small acreage and terrain characteristic of farms in Hawai'i. The Department supports the intent of this bill, but otherwise defers to the University of Hawaii College of Tropical Agriculture about the goals, budget, and report to establish the pilot program.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



HB-1717

Submitted on: 2/14/2022 2:17:44 PM

Testimony for HET on 2/16/2022 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Alan Gottlieb	Ponoholo Ranch Limited	Support	No

Comments:

Plese support HB 1717



Email: communications@ulupono.com

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION & TECHNOLOGY
Wednesday, February 16, 2022 — 2:00 p.m.

Ulupono Initiative supports HB 1717, Relating to Agriculture.

Dear Chair Takayama and Members of the Committee:

My name is Micah Munekata, and I am the Director of Government Affairs at Ulupono Initiative. We are a Hawai'i-focused impact investment firm that strives to improve the quality of life throughout the islands by helping our communities become more resilient and self-sufficient through locally produced food; renewable energy and clean transportation; and better management of freshwater and waste.

Ulupono supports HB 1717, which appropriates funds to the University of Hawai'i to establish a foreign agriculture small equipment pilot program and requires a report to the Legislature.

According to the 2017 USDA NASS Census of Agriculture, 66% of Hawai'i's 7,328 farms statewide, or 4,868 farms, are between 1–9 acres. In addition, 78%, or 5,701 farms, produce less than \$25,000 in sales. Since the average farmer in Hawai'i is a small farmer with limited land, it is critical for local growers to have access to farming equipment suitable for Hawai'i. Right-sized equipment can better help smaller farms develop into future medium and large-sized farms that can grow more local food.

As Hawai'i's local food issues become increasingly complex and challenging, organizations need additional resources and support to address and overcome them. We appreciate this committee's efforts to look at policies that support local food production.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully,

Micah Munekata
Director of Government Affairs

Investing in a Sustainable Hawai'i



P.O. Box 253, Kunia, Hawai'i 96759
Phone: (808) 848-2074; Fax: (808) 848-1921
e-mail info@hfbf.org; www.hfbf.org

February 16, 2022

HEARING BEFORE THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION & TECHNOLOGY

TESTIMONY ON HB 1717
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Conference Room 309 & Videoconference
2:00 PM

Aloha Chair Takayama, Vice-Chair Clark, and Members of the Committee:

I am Brian Miyamoto, Executive Director of the Hawaii Farm Bureau (HFB). Organized since 1948, the HFB is comprised of 1,800 farm family members statewide and serves as Hawaii's voice of agriculture to protect, advocate and advance the social, economic, and educational interests of our diverse agricultural community.

The Hawaii Farm Bureau supports HB 1717, which appropriates funds to the University of Hawaii to establish a foreign agriculture small equipment pilot program.

As the demand for agriculture labor continues to increase, while the availability of labor decreases, farmers and ranchers continue to look for alternative means to operate their farms through technology, like small equipment tractors. A limited number of weed management solutions and the increase in labor cost have made weed management a major challenge for many small farmers in Hawaii. Many small farmers also have a need for smaller harvesting and field prep equipment that is not readily available in Hawaii. These growers include vegetable crops, wetland crops, and livestock forage crops. There is a need to identify high technology small equipment and evaluate its applicability for Hawaii's diverse agriculture systems.

Countries such as Japan have small equipment that is suitable for Hawaii's small farmers, however, the engines that are attached to small equipment from foreign countries like Japan are not in compliance with EPA standard regulations. This pilot program would help identify desired small equipment as well as finding solutions that would allow Hawaii farmers to import foreign equipment that complies with EPA standards.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of this measure.



COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION AND TECHNOLOGY
Rep. Gregg Takayama, Chair
Rep. Linda Clark, Vice Chair

HB1717
Relating to the Agriculture

Wednesday, February 16, 2022, 2:00 PM
VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

Chair Takayama, Vice Chair Clark, and Members of the Committee,

The Hawaii Cattlemen's Council (HCC) is the Statewide umbrella organization comprised of the five county level Cattlemen's Associations. Our member ranchers represent over 60,000 head of beef cows; more than 75% of all the beef cows in the State. Ranchers are the stewards of over 750 thousand acres of land in Hawaii, or 20% of the State's total land mass. We represent the interests of Hawaii's cattle producers.

The Hawaii Cattlemen's Council **supports HB1717** to appropriate funds to the University of Hawaii to establish a foreign agriculture small equipment pilot program. Advanced technology and access to equipment is one of the keys to keeping small ranchers and farmers viable. Ranchers and farmers don't always have the capital to be able to invest in new equipment, but the University of Hawaii can leverage funds to provide information on the best equipment to utilize and evaluate its applicability across Hawaii's agricultural needs and situations. This pilot program would allow ranchers and farmers to understand options for potential equipment investments.

We appreciate the opportunity to testify on this measure.

Nicole Galase
Hawaii Cattlemen's Council
Managing Director





HAWAII CROP IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION

In Support of HB1717
Relating to Agriculture

House Committee on Higher Education & Technology

Date: Wednesday, February 16, 2022

Time: 2:00 p.m.

Place: Videoconference

Chair Takayama, Vice Chair Clark, and members of the committee:

Thank you for allowing the Hawaii Crop Improvement Association the opportunity to provide testimony in **support** of HB1717, which appropriates funds to the University of Hawaii to establish a foreign agriculture small equipment pilot program and requires a report to the Legislature.

Many farmers and ranchers need new technology to service their small farms, including vegetable crops, wetland crops, and livestock forage crops. There is a need to identify small equipment and evaluate its applicability for Hawaii's diverse agriculture systems. Although the equipment exists other places, such as Japan, it is not readily available in Hawaii due to EPA regulations. This pilot program would help identify desired small equipment as well as finding solutions that would allow Hawaii farmers to import foreign equipment that complies with EPA standards.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify in support of HB1717. If you have any questions, please contact me at your convenience.

Sincerely,

Pono Chong
Hawaii Crop Improvement Association

The Hawaii Crop Improvement Association is a Hawaii-based non-profit organization that promotes modern agriculture to help farmers and communities succeed. Through education, collaboration, and advocacy, we work to ensure a safe and sustainable food supply, support responsible farming practices, and build a healthy economy.



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
THE THIRTY-FIRST LEGISLATURE
REGULAR SESSION OF 2022

COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION & TECHNOLOGY

Rep. Gregg Takayama, Chair
Rep. Linda Clark, Vice Chair

Wednesday, February 16, 2022 2:00pm
VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE
Conference Room 309
State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street

HB1717 RELATING TO AGRICULTURE: Appropriates funds to establish a foreign agriculture small equipment pilot program.

My name is Eric S. Tanouye and I am the President for the Hawaii Floriculture and Nursery Association. HFNA is a statewide umbrella organization with approximately 300 members. Our membership is made up with breeders, hybridizers, propagators, growers, shippers, wholesalers, retailers, educators, and the allied industry, which supports our efforts in agriculture.

The Hawaii Floriculture and Nursery Association (HFNA) **SUPPORTS House Bill 1717**

It is always important for an industry to embrace change and innovation to stay relevant and efficient. This bill will help to improve the abilities of our Nurserymen and women to become more competitive in production and possibly more efficient with workforce.

We humbly would like you to consider adding a survey or study to be done by College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (CTAHR) to survey/poll our industry to find out what are the bottlenecks with lack of labor and how we can increase our existing work force to become more productive and efficient with the capability to mechanize using small tools/equipment to do existing tasks. Tasks which are necessary for us to continue to produce high quality products and services which our floriculture (Farmers/Ranchers) industries have been known for.

If you have any questions at this time, I would be happy to discuss them and can be reached by phone at 808-959-3535 ext 22, cell 960-1433 and email eric@greenpointnursery.com.

Supporting Agriculture and Hawaii,


Eric S. Tanouye
President
Hawaii Floriculture and Nursery Association

HB-1717

Submitted on: 2/14/2022 5:48:13 PM

Testimony for HET on 2/16/2022 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
John R. Gordines	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Chair Takayama, Vice-Chair Clark, and Members of the Committee:

I support HB 1717, which appropriates funds to the University of Hawaii to establish a foreign agriculture small equipment pilot program.

As the demand for agriculture labor continues to increase, while the availability of labor decreases, farmers and ranchers continue to look for alternative means to operate their farms through technology, like small equipment tractors. A limited number of weed management solutions and the increase in labor costs have made weed management a major challenge for many small farmers in Hawaii. Many small farmers also have a need for smaller harvesting and field prep equipment that is not readily available in Hawaii. These growers include vegetable crops, wetland crops, and livestock forage crops. There is a need to identify high technology small equipment and evaluate its applicability for Hawaii’s diverse agriculture systems.

Countries such as Japan have small equipment that is suitable for Hawaii’s small farmers, however, the engines that are attached to small equipment from foreign countries like Japan are not in compliance with EPA standard regulations. This pilot program would help identify desired small equipment as well as finding solutions that would allow Hawaii farmers to import foreign equipment that complies with EPA standards.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of this measure

Mahalo,

John Gordines

Kauai Farmer

HB-1717

Submitted on: 2/15/2022 12:14:29 AM

Testimony for HET on 2/16/2022 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Frederick M. Mencher	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Chair Takayama, Vice-Chair Clark, and Members of the Committee:

I support HB 1717, which appropriates funds to the University of Hawaii to establish a foreign agriculture small equipment pilot program.

As the demand for agriculture labor continues to increase, while the availability of labor decreases, farmers and ranchers continue to look for alternative means to operate their farms through technology, like small equipment tractors. A limited number of weed management solutions and the increase in labor costs have made weed management a major challenge for many small farmers in Hawaii. Many small farmers also have a need for smaller harvesting and field prep equipment that is not readily available in Hawaii. These growers include vegetable crops, wetland crops, and livestock forage crops. There is a need to identify high technology small equipment and evaluate its applicability for Hawaii’s diverse agriculture systems.

Countries such as Japan have small equipment that is suitable for Hawaii’s small farmers, however, the engines that are attached to small equipment from foreign countries like Japan are not in compliance with EPA standard regulations. This pilot program would help identify desired small equipment as well as finding solutions that would allow Hawaii farmers to import foreign equipment that complies with EPA standards.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of this measure

Mahalo,

Frederick M. Mencher

HB-1717

Submitted on: 2/15/2022 8:12:40 AM

Testimony for HET on 2/16/2022 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Randy Cabral	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Strongly support