



# UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

## Legislative Testimony

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Written Testimony Presented to the  
Senate Committee on Higher Education  
Thursday, February 3, 2022 at 3:00 p.m.

by

Vassilis L. Syrmos  
Vice President for Research and Innovation  
University of Hawai'i System

SB 2304 – RELATING TO THE RESEARCH CORPORATION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII

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

The University of Hawai'i (UH) appreciates the Hawai'i State Legislature's intent to help provide clarity to the purpose of the Research Corporation of the University of Hawai'i (RCUH) through SB 2304 but opposes this measure.

We believe that narrowing UH's use of RCUH to only research and training of research personnel in Section 2 of the bill will unintentionally, but severely reduce UH's effectiveness and impact its missions of research, instruction, and public service. Many of the programs that will be impacted are not for regular tuition and fee instruction at UH, but are programs directed to improving STEM education in Hawai'i, increasing first time college students among underrepresented populations, assisting underrepresented groups in navigating college, and so on.

In addition to research, about 40-45 percent of UH's annual extramural awards are for non-research projects such as training grants and student development and support grants, to name a few. Many of these projects are federally funded and are equally deserving of effective, efficient and prompt services so that UH can meet the terms and conditions of the grants. RCUH is a key resource in UH administering these non-research grants and contracts and is why historically HRS 304A-112 referred to sponsored research and training.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony on this measure.



TESTIMONY PRESENTED BEFORE THE  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION  
February 3, 2022, 3:00 pm

**SB2304 – RELATING TO THE RESEARCH CORPORATION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII**

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

The Research Corporation of the University of Hawai'i (RCUH) respectfully opposes Senate Bill 2304 as we do not feel that the proposed changes are necessary or appropriate at this time.

During the last legislative session this committee requested that UH utilize a Task Force to address the committee's concerns raised in [SR148 SD1](#) and to submit a report of its findings and recommendations. This has since been completed and at your request, Dr. Vassilis Syrmos submitted the [task force report](#) and its recommendations prior to the start of this legislative session.

Efforts are currently underway to address the committee's concerns. RCUH has also publicly committed to evaluating and evolving our operations to ensure that we are working in better alignment with UH, and within the scope of our intended purpose, as reflected in our [2022-2026 Strategic Plan](#). We respectfully request that the Senate Higher Education Committee allow RCUH the time to do our due diligence and work with UH to ensure an outcome that is conducive to supporting UH researchers appropriately, efficiently, and in a cost-effective manner.

By altering the RCUH statute at this time, it is likely to result in unintended consequences that will adversely impact UH, RCUH, and most importantly, the continued success of research in this state. This is especially troubling as it is being proposed during one of the most difficult financial periods this state has had to endure.

In conclusion, I respectfully oppose this bill and request that this committee give RCUH and UH the time necessary to evaluate and implement changes in accordance with the task force report.

Sincerely,

Leonard R. Gouveia, Jr.  
Executive Director



**HAWAII GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION**  
AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO

**RANDY PERREIRA**, Executive Director • Tel: 808.543.0011 • Fax: 808.528.0922

The Thirty-First Legislature, State of Hawaii  
The Senate  
Committee on Higher Education

Testimony by  
Hawaii Government Employees Association

S.B. 2304 – RELATING TO THE RESEARCH  
CORPORATION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII

The Hawaii Government Employees Association, AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO supports the intent of S.B. 2304 which clarifies that the purpose of the Research Corporation of the University of Hawaii is to promote educational, scientific, and literary pursuits through research, training of research personnel, and dissemination of knowledge by publication of research findings, and that its undertakings shall be limited to acts that are reasonably necessary to carry out this purpose.

The Research Corporation of the University of Hawaii (RCUH) was founded to promote, encourage, develop, and conduct scientific research and investigation in all branches of learning with the intent to disseminate that information to the public. In order to accomplish this, RCUH was exempted from a variety of state laws regarding reimbursement of funds and granted flexibility in hiring personnel. However, we agree with concerns being raised that since its creation in 1965, RCUH has expanded its scope beyond the original intent and that it appropriately necessitates a review to ensure the Corporation's actions are aligned with its purpose.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of S.B. 2304.

Respectfully submitted,

Randy Perreira  
Executive Director

**SB-2304**

Submitted on: 2/1/2022 12:30:57 PM

Testimony for HRE on 2/3/2022 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Sarita Rai	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

Please **do not** support SB 2304. It will not only gut RCUH but also the University of Hawai'i. The only client that RCUH has is the University. RCUH created in 1965. To name a few benefits, the flexibility of RCUH enables the University to work with partner universities overseas in research and teaching in all disciplines. It also allows for training and education of our students - beneficial for the state of Hawai'i.

**SB-2304**

Submitted on: 2/1/2022 7:09:49 PM

Testimony for HRE on 2/3/2022 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Karl Magnacca	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

I am writing to oppose SB2304. While I think there could be a case to be made that RCUH is being overly used in ways that are anti-worker, this bill is a blunt instrument that does little to resolve the problems while creating potentially catastrophic problems for Hawaii's natural resource community. By restricting RCUH to strictly research and dissemination of research, it would eliminate the usage of RCUH as an employment option for vital contract and quasi-state organizations such as the Army Natural Resources Program, the Hawaii Invasive Species Councils, the Hawaii Ant Lab, and other agencies that carry out natural resource and environmental management rather than research. Without RCUH as an option, these organizations would have to either turn to out-of-state contracting entities or possibly be left without any way to hire short-term employees for grant-funded positions.

A better solution to the fundamental problem would be to reform the state civil service procedures to allow for faster hiring, rapid turnaround times for posting positions, and use of outside funds for term positions. But restricting RCUH without providing a better alternative, or any at all, will lead to worse outcomes for both individual workers and the state as a whole.

**SB-2304**

Submitted on: 2/1/2022 8:40:47 PM

Testimony for HRE on 2/3/2022 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Dawn Bruns	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

Please don't move this legislation forward. Almost all of my natural resources field crew friends (other than federal and state employees) in the Pacific Islands are RCUH employees. This system facilitates recruitment and retention of local experienced people because they are able to maintain their retirement benefits when they move/advance from one job/island to another. Why would anyone want to get rid of (almost completely eliminate) this successful program? These dedicated people fight invasive species, propagate and outplant endangered plants, conserve native forest vegetation... please leave this program in its current form. Thank you

**SB-2304**

Submitted on: 2/2/2022 12:20:06 AM

Testimony for HRE on 2/3/2022 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
James B Friday	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

Aloha Chair Kim, Vice-chair Kidani, and members of the Senate Committee on Higher Education,

I am writing to oppose SB 2304. I am faculty at the University of Hawaii, however, this is my personal testimony and does not reflect official positions of the University.

SB 2304 would reduce the effectiveness of RCUH. I bring in tens of thousands of dollars a year in external grants, and the money and the people I am able to hire on these grants are managed by RCUH. I also work with professional colleagues across the state who are RCUH employees. Reducing the ability of RCUH to use grants to hire staff will negatively impact both research and management, to the detriment of our state.

Sincerely,

J. B. Friday

**SB-2304**

Submitted on: 2/2/2022 4:50:29 AM

Testimony for HRE on 2/3/2022 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Bret Mossman	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

I strongly oppose SB2304. RCUH management positions are critical to fulfilling conservation activities in Hawai'i. From addressing invasive species to protecting our critically endangered species these positions are essential for protecting our resources. Conservation in Hawai'i would grind to a halt without these support positions.



**SB-2304**

Submitted on: 2/2/2022 9:47:23 AM

Testimony for HRE on 2/3/2022 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Gerry Smith	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

Aloha,

As a Maui County resident, I strongly oppose any measure that inhibits the growth of Research and Development in Maui County.

There are three legs to Maui's economy, Tourism, Agriculture and the Tech industry. I have seen what happens to the economy when Sugar Plantations shutter their doors, I have seen the impact of COVID on the tourism economy (and 9/11 before that). It is beyond me why you would want to inhibit the growth of the third leg of the stool, technology.

This bill is the exact opposite of what residents of Maui County want. Instead of restricting or limiting Research and Development, you should be seeking ways to expand it. We should be investing in this sector, it is the one sector that is stable and not subject to outside influences beyond our control.

I implore you to expand Research and Development, I implore you to expand the tech sector.

Passage of this bill will hurt Maui County and should not happen.

Senators Kim, Dela Cruz, and Inouye

Testimony: Paula L. Chun

Residing at: 3049 Lanikaula St., Honolulu, HI 96822

Hearing Date: Thursday, 2/3/22 at 3:00 pm

Opposition to SB2304, Relating to the Research Corporation of the University of Hawaii

I am in strong opposition to moving this bill forward into law. I don't think the compelling arguments to change RCUH is convincing. The bill tries to convince the public and other legislative representatives that RCUH acts without oversight or rules. This I know is untrue and RCUH has P&P for all hire actions and procurement (<https://www.rcuh.com/1-000/>). RCUH does follow state laws regarding procurement and is not exempt from these laws as stated in the bill. RCUH also follows the federal procurement rules under the Uniform Guidance 2 cfr 200.

There is very little data or explanation as stated in this bill as to how RCUH has expanded from its' original purpose other than the information on its' website that promotes support and enhance...development. Isn't this a benefit for the state to bring in more funding and employment opportunities.

The changes to RCUH by this bill will restrict current and future research efforts and they will not to effectively carry out it's current mission. I also want to add that I do not see egregious and unlawful ways that RCUH conducts business. As the old saying applies to any type of government interaction, "if it is not broke, don't fix it." I know that the State has a poor track record for programs that actually work. RCUH is working.

The proposed changes will affect numerous people living here. Is there a study that shows the impact to people's lives if this bill is enacted. Why would the legislature want to cause people undue hardship with all everyone is currently going through.

**SB-2304**

Submitted on: 2/2/2022 12:01:22 PM

Testimony for HRE on 2/3/2022 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
alyssa creps	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

Aloha,

I oppose this bill and don't agree that RCUH has violated what it was originally designed for as said in this bill for the "purposes of promoting, encouraging, initiating, **developing**, and conducting scientific research and investigation in all branches of learning, and disseminating to the public, the benefits of such research and investigation."

RCUH's website says its mission is to *"support and enhance research, development, and training in Hawai'i, with a focus on the University of Hawai'i"* and I believe this bill takes this out of context.

This bill would negatively impact RCUH's over 5000 employees and I believe this bill should be dismissed. If not, at a minimum language should be added that this would not affect any existing employees.

**SB-2304**

Submitted on: 2/2/2022 12:43:05 PM

Testimony for HRE on 2/3/2022 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Teya Penniman	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

February 2, 2022

Hawaii State Senate

Committee on Higher Education

Senate Bill 2304: Relating to the Research Corporation of the University of Hawaii

Aloha Chair Kim and Senators,

I strongly oppose SB 2304. RCUH has provided a successful framework for research-based conservation work throughout the Hawaiian Islands for more than 30 years. Attached to the University of Hawaii, RCUH provides essential and effective financial management and human resources services to UH and other public agencies.

In addition to research and training projects funded by extramural contracts and grants, RCUH has supported projects funded by local, state, and federal funds. These projects protect nearshore and pelagic marine environments and terrestrial ecosystems, document the effects of climate change, help mentor new farmers, and work with students and teachers in elementary schools and graduate programs. Examples of specific projects that could be affected by this bill include the island-based Watershed Partnerships, Invasive Species Committees, Forest Bird and Seabird Recovery Projects, sea urchin hatcheries, and propagation of endangered plants and snails. All of these projects are research-based, with strong connections to the University of Hawaii. But the bill, as written, could have the unintended consequence of shutting down projects that also include management actions. It is unlikely that projects and funders could quickly shift to some other framework. These projects generate many jobs, provide pathways to new careers, and pump millions of dollars annually into the local economy. As drafted, this bill could cause thousands of local, hardworking residents to lose their jobs, lives would be upended, and decades of work to protect native places and our quality of life would be lost.

A massive change like this should not be taken without thinking through the unintended consequences that will surely follow. Please do not move this bill forward.

Mahalo nui for your consideration.

*Teya Penniman*



**SB-2304**

Submitted on: 2/2/2022 1:13:04 PM

Testimony for HRE on 2/3/2022 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Frank Wood	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

I oppose this bill due to the illegitimate claims that RCUH has "expanded its undertakings into areas beyond its original eponymous purpose". RCUH has done great things for the UH scientific community while maintaining it's original purpose of "promoting, encouraging, initiating, developing, and conducting scientific research and investigation in all branches of learning, and disseminating to the public, the benefits of such research and investigation." Passing this bill would not only restrict the legitimate scientific research, it will also affect the 5,000 employees who currently work for RCUH.

This bill is erroneous and should be dismissed.

SENATOR DONNA MERCADO, KIM, CHAIR  
SENATOR MICHELLE N. KIDANI, VICE CHAIR  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Hearing Date: Thursday, February 3, 2022  
Time: 3:00 p.m.  
Place: Conference Room 229 and video-conference

### **Testimony Opposing S.B. No. 2304 Relating to the Research Corporation of the University of Hawaii**

I am submitting individually, my testimony in opposition to S.B. No. 2304. The proposed clarification to the purpose of RCUH is unnecessary and restricts its ability to hire personnel and engage in activities that may be essential to its purpose and functions, among other changes. The revised bill oversimplifies the purpose of RCUH and scientific research. RCUH's purpose as stated on its website, is to *support and enhance research, development and training in Hawaii*, which is well within the scope of its original purpose of **"promoting, encouraging, initiating, developing,** and conducting scientific research and investigation in all branches of learning, and disseminating to the public, the benefits of such research and investigation." (emphasis provided).

Restricting the types of permissible conduct and methods to those proposed in the amended section 304A-3001(b) would be detrimental to the long-term progress of scientific research and shift administrative burden to researchers and UH. Eliminating aspects such as development, training, studies, methods, and scholarship and limiting personnel to "research personnel" will stymie RCUH and UH's research endeavors and the needs of researchers and external sponsors. The services provided by RCUH are crucial to research related activities and should not be limited to "research personnel". The amendments suggest that activities other than "research" perse, that are not performed by "research personnel" do not benefit research or contribute to the purpose of RCUH. The reality is that research is furthered by collaboration among personnel that do not perform "research" functions that are nevertheless important to RCUH's function and provide support for researchers and sponsors.

In addition to supporting scientific and educational pursuits, the unique geographical location of Hawaii gives it a presence in the international research community and has contributed to Hawaii's economy. The RCUH Achievement Report posted on its website shows the exponential growth of business and its employees in support of research. RCUH should not be so restricted that it cannot constantly evolve and adapt with the needs of UH, the research community, and the public. As we are grappling with the Covid-19 pandemic, unnecessary restrictions may be debilitating for RCUH, UH research, and the Hawaii economy.

I caution against a myopic approach to research administration and encourage a shift toward long-term sustainability. For the foregoing reasons, RCUH has not exceeded the scope of its original purpose, and I urge the committee to vote against S.B. No. 2304 Relating to the Research Corporation of the University of Hawaii. Thank you for this opportunity to testify on this matter.

Respectfully,  
Shelby Taguma

Springer Kaye  
PO Box 46  
Hilo, HI 96728

**Comments on SB2304 relating to RCUH**  
Senate Committee on Higher Education  
February 3, 2022 3:00 pm

Dear Chair Kim and Senators:

As an RCUH employee, and in my personal capacity, I am writing to express my concern about the content of this bill. The Research Corporation of the University of Hawaii provides valuable and essential services to manage the research projects of the University and other state agencies. In my role, I raise the funds and oversee an annual budget of ~\$1.3M, used to increase the knowledge about and improve the management of invasive species through applied research. Much of this funding comes from off-island and from out-of-state, supporting 18 full time jobs in Hilo.

I am particularly concerned by, and seek to understand the purpose of, the deletion of Section 3, Items 4 and 5, of Section 304A-3001, Hawaii Revised Statutes (Page 6, lines 6-12), limiting dissemination of knowledge to publication only. This deletion may unintentionally prevent RCUH projects from accessing the wide variety of communication channels available to share the results of our research for the benefit of Hawaii's people.

Scientists no longer simply publish our research in peer-reviewed journals for the exclusive benefit of other scientists. It is now a fundamental expectation that results are delivered in a form and via whichever media are most appropriate to the intended end-user. After publishing a paper, I am expected to deliver lectures on that paper at conferences, industry meetings, or classrooms using a variety of visual tools. My social media tech will translate our experiment into lay-person's terms and share them on social media, with graphics designed to grab the attention of our target audience and their fast-scrolling eyes. My community engagement team will hold public meetings or workshops to teach the target audience how to make use of the new information, and create videos and webinars posted on our website for further reference. In the interest of equity, efforts will be made to ensure that each of these online resources and public events are ADA-compliant, and that the locations and times of public meetings meet the needs of traditionally underserved communities that may need the information. We bring the information where it is needed, in the form the makes it most accessible.

All of this is simply to say that "publication" is no longer the only, the most valuable, or even the most widely used means of disseminating knowledge to the public, and the role of RCUH should not end with the publication of results.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Springer Kaye



# Ten steps to innovative dissemination

## 1. Get the basics right

Define your objectives, map your audience(s), target and frame your messages and bring this together into a dissemination plan of what you'll release and when.

## 2. Keep the right profile

Use personal websites, social media accounts, researcher identifiers and academic social networks to make you and your research visible.

## 3. Encourage participation

In the age of Open Science, don't just broadcast, go for multi-directional dissemination. Invite & engage with others to participate & collaborate.

## 4. Open science for impact

Open Access publications and preprints mean more citations. In addition, publishing datasets, software and peer reviews increase your number of citable research outputs.



"Publication"

## 5. Remix traditional outputs

Give traditional outputs like research articles and books an impact-boost with accompanying lay-summaries, press-releases, blogs, and visual/video abstracts.

## 6. Go live

In person dissemination doesn't just have to be at stuffy conferences – hit the road and take part in science festivals, science slams, TEDx talks, science festivals, or roadshows.

## 7. Think visual

Disseminate findings through art or multimedia interpretations. Let your artistic side loose or use new visualisation techniques to produce intuitive, attractive data displays.

## 8. Respect diversity

Research should reach all who might benefit. Respect inclusion in scientific dissemination by creating messages which reflect gender, demography and ability diversity.

## 9. Find the right tools

Choose media, format and dissemination strategy based on your communication objectives. Find tools via, e.g., the OpenUP Hub: [openuphub.eu/disseminate/services](https://openuphub.eu/disseminate/services)

## 10. Evaluate, evaluate, evaluate

Assess your dissemination activities. Are they having the right impact? If not, why not?



Dr. Luke Flynn  
94-1115 Hahana Street  
Waipahu, HI 96797

Dear Members of the 31<sup>st</sup> Hawai'i State Legislature:

I am writing to express my strong **OPPOSITION** for **SB2304 – Relating to Research Corporation of the University of Hawai'i**.

In 1992, I graduated from the University of Hawai'i at Manoa with a PhD in Geology & Geophysics. I have lived in Hawai'i for 35.5 years and raised two children here who also graduated from UH. I am now a professor in the Hawai'i Institute of Geophysics and Planetology (HIGP). Throughout my research career, I have managed 28 external grants and contracts worth approximately \$60M or an average of \$2M/year since graduation. A very high proportion of these funds are used to support faculty co-Investigators, staff, and students that have all supported the State economy. Since 2002, I have been the Director of the NASA Hawai'i Space Grant Consortium (HSGC) and the NASA Hawai'i EPSCoR Programs. The function of HSGC is to provide STEM education and NASA workforce development opportunities in Hawai'i. The function of NASA Hawai'i EPSCoR is to expand aerospace research infrastructure within the State. Finally, since 2007, I have been the Director of the Hawai'i Space Flight Laboratory (HSFL). HSFL's objective is to design, build, test, launch, and operate small spacecraft from the Hawaiian Islands. On November 3, 2015, HSFL's first launch from the Pacific Missile Range Facility did not achieve orbit. However, there were a lot of successes. The rail launch system worked perfectly. The world took notice that Hawai'i can become a space-faring State, and the world took notice that our local students built a satellite that passed all tests for space flight. Since that time HSFL and HSGC have provided hands-on satellite-building experiences for about 450 UH undergraduates of which 52% are underrepresented students.

The Research Corporation of the University of Hawai'i (RCUH) has been central to HSFL success. HSFL received a \$29M Air Force contract to build the rocket launch at the Pacific Missile Range Facility. This contract as well as over \$10M in further funding to build small satellites has been managed by RCUH. Furthermore, HSFL's engineering staff are all RCUH employees (90% of which are the UH students mentioned above). Were it not for RCUH, HSFL would not be positioned to bid on 2-3 year rapid satellite development projects that require quick "staffing up" to cover specific engineering tasks. I would further declare very clearly that were it not for RCUH, HSFL would not be successful. I am very pro-business for the State of Hawai'i and aerospace represents a growth area. I have accomplished very difficult scientific and engineering projects throughout my time at UH, and that is due, in large part, to the supportive and knowledgeable staff at RCUH. I want to voice my strong opposition to this bill that would further limit RCUH.

Thank you for your time and consideration,  
Dr. Luke Flynn

**SB-2304**

Submitted on: 2/2/2022 2:21:45 PM

Testimony for HRE on 2/3/2022 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Charlene Tom	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Chair

Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Vice Chair

Committee on Higher Education

Charlene Tom

Thursday, February 3, 2022

Oppose S.B. No. 2304, Relating to the Research Corporation of the University of Hawai'i

I am a lifelong resident of Hawai'i and a proud graduate of the University of Hawai'i at Manoa. I strongly oppose S.B. No. 2304, Relating to the Research Corporation of the University of Hawai'i, which would clarify that the purpose of the research corporation is to promote educational, scientific, and literary pursuits through research, training of research personnel, and dissemination of knowledge by publication of research findings, and its undertakings shall be limited to acts that are reasonably necessary to carry out this purpose.

As stated in S.B. No. 2304, the legislature in 1965 granted the research corporation of the University of Hawai'i operational flexibility to promote cooperative research projects with private firms and persons. This flexibility has allowed the research corporation to grow into a great resource for administering contracts and grants not just with private entities but also with governmental bodies at the state and federal level. Restricting the role of the research corporation

would negatively impact the ability of the university's sponsored research projects to solicit and obtain future funding at the current high levels.

Maintaining the operational flexibility of the research corporation of the University of Hawai'i is essential for maintaining the health of our state's economy and its future growth. I urge the committee to oppose S.B. No. 2304. Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Chair  
Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Vice Chair  
Committee on Higher Education

Allison Virbitsky

Thursday, February 3, 2022 3pm

Opposition to S.B. No. 2304, Relating to the Research Corporation of the University of Hawaii

Moving to Hawaii and graduating from University of Hawaii at Manoa, I see the importance of the Research Corporation of the University of Hawaii. I'm firmly against S.B. No. 2304.

The bill states this: "Established in 1965 for the purposes of promoting, encouraging, initiating, developing, and conducting scientific research and investigation in all branches of learning, and disseminating to the public, the benefits of such research and investigation." As a lifelong learner, it would be disastrous to limit the work that the Research Corporation has been doing so well for years. The RCUH has helped and will continue to help by promoting, encouraging, initiating, developing, and conducting scientific research and investigation research. Change is the only constant, so it is natural that missions modify.

Therefore, S.B. No. 2304, should not move forward and degrade the Research Corporation of the University of Hawaii's ability to function efficiently.

**SB-2304**

Submitted on: 2/2/2022 2:30:46 PM

Testimony for HRE on 2/3/2022 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Cami Nagata	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

Senators Kim, Dela Cruz, and Inouye

Testimony: Cami Nagata

Residing at: 101 Chong Street, Hilo, HI 96720

Hearing Date: Thursday, 2/3/22 at 3:00 pm

Opposition to SB2304, Relating to the Research Corporation of the University of Hawaii

To Whom it May Concern:

I strongly oppose SB2304. The bill implies that RCUH acts without oversight or rules. This is untrue as RCUH has policies and procedures in place for all hire actions and procurement (<https://www.rcuh.com/1-000/>). RCUH operates in line with state laws regarding procurement and is not exempt from these laws as stated in the bill. RCUH also follows the federal procurement rules under the Uniform Guidance 2 cfr 200.

There is very little data or explanation as to why it is thought that RCUH has expanded from its' original purpose. I believe that the state benefits from RCUH as many RCUH research projects bring in more funding and employment opportunities.

I truly believe the changes made by this bill will restrict current and future research efforts and will hinder RCUH's ability to effectively carry out it's current mission.

In addition, the proposed changes will negatively impact numerous Hawaii residents. I do not see how this bill will be beneficial to research and am unable to support it especially without any studies or information on how this bill will impact the people of Hawaii. Given the current times we are in, I do not support a bill that could potentially devastate academic research as well as create undue hardship for Hawaii residents.

**SB-2304**

Submitted on: 2/2/2022 2:43:07 PM

Testimony for HRE on 2/3/2022 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Elizabeth Speith	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Chair

Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Vice Chair

Oppose for S.B. 2304 RELATING TO THE RESEARCH CORPORATION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII

Aloha Chair Donna Mercado Kim, Vice Chair Kidani, and Committee Members,

I am a resident of Upcountry Maui and have worked and volunteered in environmental conservation with all manner of state, county, and federal agencies and groups, and the University of Hawai'i for over 20 years.

The Research Corporation of the Univeristy of Hawai'i supports essential environmental research including "on the ground" research projects across the state such as the Island Invasive Species Committees, the Watershed Partnerships, the forest bird and seabird recovery projects, the Hawai'i Ant Lab, and the Plant Extinction Prevention Program. Many of these projects are working on research and research applications that have a direct impact on the preservation of endangered species that potentially could go extinct in the next 1-10 years. This work is incredibly important and time sensitive. Interruptions to these programs could literally have immediate impacts on the plants, animals, and places that these projects have been established to serve. The ability to conduct research and apply research methods "on the ground" is not duplicated by other agencies and groups.

I strongly **oppose** any changes to the structure and mandate of RCUH that would interrupt or cripple the work that is being done to prevent extinctions and conduct environmental research. Thank you for your time and this opportunity to provide testimony.



Senator Donna Mercado Kim  
Senator Donavan Dela Cruz  
Senator Lorraine Inouye

S.B. No.2304, S.D. 1 - Relating to the Research Corporation of the University of Hawaii

Date of Hearing: Thursday, February 3, 2022

Time and Place of Hearing: 3:00pm, CCR 229 & Via Videoconference

### **IN OPPOSITION**

My name is Margaret (Margo) Edwards. I am a 30+year faculty member who works at the University of Hawaii (UH). I currently direct the Applied Research Laboratory at UH with over 80 employees hired through the Research Corporation of the University of Hawaii (RCUH). I offer this testimony as an individual citizen.

I strongly oppose S.B. No.2304, SD 1, Relating to the Research Corporation of the University of Hawaii, which seeks to restrict the functionality of RCUH to “its original eponymous purpose.” UH is one of the top economic contributors to the State of Hawaii, and its ability to contribute to our community has been significantly enhanced through RCUH, which has proven agile and adaptable in supporting UH to accomplish its research mission.

The United States research enterprise has evolved significantly since RCUH was established in 1965, and many organizations have fallen by the wayside because they were unable to adapt to the changing research environment. Those organizations that have continued to thrive have succeeded because they were able to see beyond “what was originally intended” and address “what is needed now.” If the State of Hawaii is to continue moving forward, for example to develop a new high-tech-based economic engine, then it should not send RCUH reeling back towards a definition that was written more than half a century ago. I wholeheartedly oppose moving this bill forward, because I don’t think any of us should want to push the State of Hawaii back into the past.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

**SB-2304**

Submitted on: 2/2/2022 2:57:12 PM

Testimony for HRE on 2/3/2022 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Russell Higa	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

I oppose this bill because I believe it fails to rein in RCUH to its original purpose and instead effectively redefines it for a new, and severely narrow, purpose. The language of the original statute defining RCUH shows a deep understanding that a successful research project involves much more than training researchers and publishing papers; failing to recognize this will severely hamper RCUH's effectiveness and will ultimately be detrimental to the University of Hawaii.

The relationship between the University and RCUH has always been clearly defined, respected, and most importantly: successful. Please do not change that. Please do not pass this bill.

**LATE**

**SB-2304**

Submitted on: 2/2/2022 3:09:52 PM

Testimony for HRE on 2/3/2022 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Adam Radford	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

February 2, 2022

Hawai'i State Senate

Committee on Higher Education

Senate Bill 2304: Relating to the Research Corporation of the University of Hawaii

Aloha Chair Kim and Senators,

I strongly oppose SB 2304. My concern is the unintended consequences as this bill is currently written. As it stands, this may limit the ability of RCUH to support the goals of research being conducted throughout Hawai'i. As such, the proposed language may put at risk thousands of local jobs and end careers for local employees. Those positions, and programs, bring in millions of dollars and complete much needed work.

A massive change like this should not be taken without thinking through the unintended consequences that will surely follow. Please do not move this bill forward.

Mahalo nui for your consideration.

**LATE**

**SB-2304**

Submitted on: 2/2/2022 3:23:24 PM

Testimony for HRE on 2/3/2022 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
David Duffy	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

Dear members of the committee,

I respectfully ask that you do not pass this bill out of committee. No doubt there are good intentions in trying to focus the work of RCUH to sponsored research, but RCUH serves a much broader role in the state that is jeopardized by this bill.

The Maui Super Computer and the telescopes are supported by "non research" funding. I believe the SOEST vessels may also fall into this category. These generate tens of millions of dollars in economic activity in Hawaii. Non-research management of natural resources and watersheds and control of alien introduced species such as fire ants, miconia and coconut rhinoceros beetles may also be excluded from future RCUH efforts. Restricting training to only research personnel will also reduce current efforts through RCUH to educate the general public about natural resource issues.

RCUH has issues but this bill won't solve them and it will more likely create other issues for the state's economy and environment. Please don't vote for it.

Sincerely,

David Duffy

**LATE**

**SB-2304**

Submitted on: 2/2/2022 3:28:15 PM

Testimony for HRE on 2/3/2022 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Nathan Dube	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

Aloha Chair Kim, Vice Chair Kidani, and Senators-

I strongly oppose this measure as it could lead to severe limitations in the management of some of the state's most nefarious invasive species like Little Fire Ant, Coqui Frogs, Rapid Ohia Death, Miconia, Devil Weed, and many more. Potential limitations on outreach and education surrounding research limitations would substantially hinder outreach and management of these important invasive species as well as many other important conservation and restoration efforts by a number of natural resource management entities overseen by RCUH. While RCUH provides important structure, policy, and other HR support to these programs, the bill in it's current form does not address the unintended consequences that could severely hinder the State's ability to conduct important invasive species management and other restoration efforts across Hawaii.

Mahalo nui for your time.

**LATE**

February 3, 2022

TO: Hawai`i State Senate Committee on Higher Education

FROM: Ashley E. Maynard, Ph.D., representing my own position and not the position of any organization

**RE: SB 2304—Relating to the Research Corporation of the University of Hawaii**

**I urge you not to pass this bill.**

This bill will narrow UH's use of RCUH to only research and training of research personnel, which will severely reduce UH's effectiveness in meeting its mission of instruction, research, and public service.

RCUH provides the agility—effective, efficient, and timely service—so that UH can meet the terms of research and training grants, including training grants not meant to produce research but, rather, meant to produce important results for the community such as improving STEM education in Hawai`i, assisting underrepresented groups in navigating college life, and more.

I have worked with RCUH via UH to run some of my projects, and I can tell you that everything is checked by UH fiscal officers to align with UH spending rules, in addition to RCUH's own oversight procedures. It seems to me that projects run through RCUH run well and get extra scrutiny. The university needs a functioning and agile RCUH, and this bill will destroy that.

**I respectfully ask you to vote No on SB 2304.**

Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony on this measure.

Ashley E. Maynard, Ph.D.

Mānoa

**LATE**

**SB-2304**

Submitted on: 2/3/2022 11:31:44 AM

Testimony for HRE on 2/3/2022 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Ji-Yeon Kim	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

I strongly oppose SB2304, which suggests the current function of RCUH to be limited to research activities only. UH's primary functions are not limited to research activities. RCUH is a crucial factor in carrying out successful outreach/extension activities. Without RCUH's support, non-research projects/activities cannot be performed in a timely manner. Given that most outreach/extension activities have very tight timelines, project PIs need to hire necessary personnel and purchase essential items through the RCUH system.

**SB-2304**

Submitted on: 2/3/2022 11:39:46 AM

Testimony for HRE on 2/3/2022 3:00:00 PM



<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Sarah Yuan	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

I strongly oppose SB2304 Related to the Research Corporation of the University of Hawaii. I am a principal investigator with three active projects supported by the RCUH. These projects provide training, technical support, and evaluation services to programs implemented by the State Department of Health, funded by state or federal grants. Through these projects, the university supports the state’s endeavors in serving its people and communities, using science-based knowledge and evidence-based practices.

These projects are not in the research category. If SB2304 passed, these projects could not be served by the RCUH, and the university has to increase administrative capacity to provide support for these projects. The university/state’s hiring and procurement processes are known to be lengthy and won’t be able to meet the schedule of deliverables these projects required, as most of the contract terms are one year or shorter.

Many principal investigators are in the same situation as I am. Our success in supporting the university’s mission in education, research, and service depends on the excellent, speedy, and reliable services that RCUH has been providing for us.

I urge you to vote against SB2304. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



**LATE**

**SB-2304**

Submitted on: 2/3/2022 11:56:51 AM

Testimony for HRE on 2/3/2022 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Ivette Stern	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

I strongly oppose SB2304 Related to the Research Corporation of the University of Hawai'i. I am a principal investigator with a number of active, externally-funded projects supported by the RCUH. These projects integrate research and outreach/extension activities and focus on assessing and evaluating the conditions of children and families in Hawai'i, therefore, support the university's mission to serve Hawaii's people and communities using science-based knowledge and evidence-based practices.

Some of these projects do not necessarily fall in the research category. If SB2304 is passed, these projects could not be served by the RCUH, and the university will have to increase its administrative capacity to provide the needed support. The university/state's hiring and procurement processes are known to be lengthy and won't be able to meet the schedule of deliverables many projects require, as most of the contract terms are short.

Many principal investigators are in the same situation as I am. If passed, SB2304 will cripple our ability to support the university's mission in education, research, and service as our success depends on the excellent, speedy, and reliable services that RCUH has been providing for us.

I urge you to vote against SB2304. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.