



# UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

## ‘ŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAII

### Legislative Testimony

#### Hō'ike Mana'o I Mua O Ka 'Aha'ōlelo

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Testimony Presented Before the  
Senate Committee on Higher Education  
Thursday, March 16, 2023 at 3:00 p.m.

By

Megan Donahue, Acting Director  
Hawaii Institute of Marine Biology

And

Charles "Chip" Fletcher, Interim Dean  
School of Ocean and Earth Science and Technology

And

Michael Bruno, Provost  
University of Hawaii at Mānoa

#### HB 848 HD2 – RELATING TO HAWAII INSTITUTE FOR MARINE BIOLOGY

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

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support for HB 848 HD2, which appropriates funds for the following support staff positions at the Hawaii Institute of Marine Biology (HIMB):

- 1) Building Maintenance Worker II
- 2) Administrative Officer APT-B
- 3) Website specialist APT-B

HIMB is a world-class center for research and education with a mission to advance understanding and stewardship of oceans and coasts locally and globally. The proximity of the twenty-six acre campus with high-quality lab facilities to a living coral reef provides unparalleled opportunities for research. HIMB's scientists, educators, and support staff bring in close to \$9M annually in research, education, and outreach funds that contribute to our ability to hire Windward-based staff. As these programs continually expand, new permanent staff positions are crucial to help us sustain daily operations and meet the needs and expectations of our community partners.

HIMB has a long history of undertaking cutting edge science and our scientists were the first to report large scale coral bleaching in Hawaii and link it to high water temperatures, calling the world's attention to the consequences of global climate change. We apply our knowledge to address local as well as global problems. HIMB is pilot testing construction of hybrid reefs – human-built structures that interact with natural processes to create living reefs – that could reduce wave energy and protect nearshore cultural and infrastructure resources. HIMB is also testing novel shoreline erosion mitigation techniques that build on traditional practices to work *with* nature rather than fighting against it to shore up coastlines.

HIMB is well-known for internationally recognized training for students in conservation oriented and place-based scientific research, but we have also been working to expand vocational and technical training opportunities for local students. For example, we recently created a paid experiential learning internship program for local community college students to train with Facilities, Administration, Water Safety, Fiscal or Human Resources departments within our institution, preparing local students for real world jobs close to home.

Success in growing such programs, which provide direct benefits to local students and the State, is dependent on having permanent support staff that possess the institutional memory to efficiently navigate the State and University systems and do not turn over with individual grant cycles.

Building maintenance is critical to the operations at HIMB, with 8 research buildings, 5 housing buildings, storage facilities, boat docks, and sheds. HIMB is already operating under a minimal facilities crew and struggles to keep up with existing infrastructure maintenance needs. This hire is critical for health and safety concerns. Filling this position will allow research and education activities that are highly relevant to the university and the State to continue operating safely in well-maintained buildings. Without adequate building maintenance, HIMB may not be able to maintain a functional research infrastructure.

HIMB currently has only two permanent Administrative Officers to support 25 faculty and manage over 130 project accounts. This project load requires extensive grant management, account maintenance, budget oversight, forecasting, procurement, and disbursement of appropriated, extramural, and revolving funds. Hiring this third Administrative Officer position is essential to avoid overtime pay, staff burnout (with subsequent departure), and loss of research capacity. This hire is critical for maintaining a minimum base level of research productivity; without it, extramural grant submissions and success would likely be significantly diminished, resulting in reductions in extramural funding and associated research spending in the state.

HIMB has never had a permanent Website Specialist position. Website support was previously fulfilled by graduate assistants or extramurally-funded part-time staff, but these positions have been discontinued. HIMB has been without dedicated website and information services support for several years. With extensive programming in research, education, visitor, and community service, HIMB critically needs a permanent staff member who can manage the entirety of our web presence, online dissemination, and social media needs.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support for HB 848 HD2, provided that its passage does not impact priorities as indicated in the University's Board of Regents Approved Executive Biennium Budget.

Your consideration is greatly appreciated.

# Heʻeia National Estuarine Research Reserve

*Koʻolaupoko, Oʻahu, Hawaiʻi*

Testimony on behalf of Heʻeia National Estuarine Research Reserve

**Strongly supporting HB 848 HD2**

Senate Committee on Higher Education

March 14, 2023

Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony for HB 848 HD2 relating to Hawaiʻi Institute of Marine Biology (HIMB). As the Director the Heʻeia National Estuarine Research Reserve (NERR), I strongly support this bill.

The Heʻeia NERR is a collaborative management agreement between HIMB, DLNR, HCDA, and the community of Heʻeia (as represented by four Native Hawaiian non-profit organization). This bill, which provides funds for critical positions at HIMB, will help HIMB to fulfil its role more meaningfully as a partner of the NERR. As such, I encourage you all to pass this bill

Mahalo for your time and consideration,



Kawika Winter, Ph.D.

Director, Heʻeia National Estuarine Research Reserve

**HB-848-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/15/2023 10:32:19 AM

Testimony for HRE on 3/16/2023 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Mindy Mizobe	Testifying for HIMB (UH)	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

HIMB is in dire need of these support staff positions. The Facilities staff at HIMB are severely overworked because they are short staffed. They often have to juggle many important projects which means they are constantly back-logged. This back log creates more work because the disrepair in one area leads to another area needing repairs because the damage spreads. We need to hire more permanent staff to deal with the large amount of work it takes to maintain a world-renowned marine science research and education institution.



March 15, 2023

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**Chairperson**  
Michael W. Beasley, Esq.

Committee on Higher Education  
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Senator Michele Kidani, Vice Chair

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Ethan Cooper  
Herb Lee, Jr.  
Brad Cooper  
Colette Higgins

Aloha Chair Kim and Vice Chair Kidani and members:

**ADMINISTRATION**

**President & CEO**  
Herb Lee Jr.  
**Chief Financial Officer**  
Louis F. Perez II  
**General Counsel**  
Ethan Cooper

Re: SUPPORT for HB 848 HD2 to increase staff positions at the Hawaii Institute of Marine Biology (HIMB)

Mahalo nui for the opportunity to provide testimony in support for HB 848 HD2, which appropriates funds for the following support staff positions at the Hawai'i Institute of Marine Biology (HIMB):

- 1) Building Maintenance Worker II
- 2) Administrative Officer APT-B
- 3) Website specialist APT-B

Pacific American Foundation  
C/O 111 Hekili Street Suite A 170  
Kailua, Hawaii 96734

Phone: (808) 664-3027  
[www.thepaf.org](http://www.thepaf.org)

My name is Herb Lee, Jr. and I am the President & CEO of the Pacific American Foundation (PAF), a non-profit 501C3 organization founded in 1993. Our mission is to “improve the lives of Pacific Americans through service with dignity, courage, humility, and competence.”

PAF has been a partner with HIMB for over 25 years working to inspire students to pursue careers in marine biology and many other related fields in an effort to “grow “ the next generation of cultural practitioners and stewards of our ‘āina. We have collaborated on the restoration of Waikalua Loko I’a, which PAF owns, with huge success.

Since the acquisition of Moku O Loe, “Coconut island,” HIMB has become a world-class center for research and education with a mission to advance understanding and stewardship of oceans and coasts locally and globally. The proximity of the twenty-six-acre campus with high-quality lab facilities to a living coral reef provides unparalleled opportunities for research. Our students participate every Sunday and more working on real problems facing Kāne‘ohe Bay.

HIMB's scientists, educators, and support staff bring in close to \$9M annually in research, education, and outreach funds that contribute to HIMB's ability to hire Windward-based staff. As these programs continually expand, new permanent staff positions are crucial to help HIMB sustain daily operations and meet the needs and expectations of their community partners like PAF and many others on the windward side.

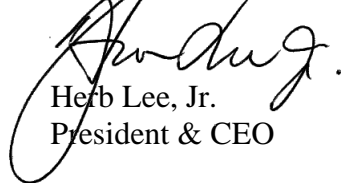
HIMB is well-known for internationally recognized training for students in conservation oriented and place-based scientific research, and have also been working to expand vocational and technical training opportunities for local students.

Success in growing such programs, which provide direct benefits to local students and the State, is dependent on having permanent support staff that possess the institutional memory to efficiently navigate the State and University systems and do not turn over with individual grant cycles.

These three positions are absolutely key to the future success of both HIMB and for the students that they serve from our own community!

Please give them your highest consideration so that we can continue to inspire and have our students thrive to meet the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

'O wai'ihonō,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Herb Lee, Jr.", written over a light blue circular stamp.

Herb Lee, Jr.  
President & CEO

**HB-848-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/14/2023 7:38:17 AM

Testimony for HRE on 3/16/2023 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Rob Toonen	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The Hawaii Institute of Marine Biology (HIMB) is a globally renowned marine biology unit that requires additional staff to maintain the facilities and quality of the educational and research experience for our local students. I strongly support this measure to provide the permanent support staff positions that are critical to sustaining daily operations for initiatives at HIMB.

**HB-848-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/14/2023 7:40:54 AM

Testimony for HRE on 3/16/2023 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Leah Barkai	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I, Leah Barkai support bill HB848 HD2 (HSCR1094). I am interning at Hawaii Institute of Marine Biology and can see how beneficial and needed this money will be to us.



**HB-848-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/14/2023 11:47:11 AM

Testimony for HRE on 3/16/2023 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Cynthia Texeira	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB848 and creating new jobs in Ko'olaupoko.

**HB-848-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/14/2023 2:40:49 PM

Testimony for HRE on 3/16/2023 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Judy Lemus	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 848 HD2 – RELATING TO HAWAII INSITUTE FOR MARINE BIOLOGY**

Chair Kim, Vice Chair Kidani, and Members of the Committee on Higher Education:

I am providing personal testimony in support for HB848 HD2 (HSCR 1094), which appropriates funds for three support staff positions at the Hawai‘i Institute of Marine Biology (HIMB).

Since the 1950s, the University of Hawai‘i has had a marine science lab located on Moku o Lo‘e. And over the past seven decades, HIMB scientists helped establish aquaculture in the State of Hawai‘i, provided the first demonstration of coral bleaching as a result of thermal stress, and conducted the first studies on Hawaiian sharks. HIMB continues to occupy a pre-eminent position in research on coral reef ecosystem processes, marine animal biosensory ecology and bioenergetics, marine evolutionary and ecological genetics, and coastal technologies. HIMB faculty are leading experts in tropical marine biology research and education, advancing the informed stewardship of Hawai‘i’s marine and coastal biodiversity.

As a former interim Director of HIMB, Associate Director, and a current faculty member, I have first hand experience with the stressors and challenges that insufficient staffing creates on the productivity and innovation at HIMB. Faculty and staff are top-notch, but are continuously overloaded with work. For example, one full-time building maintenance worker is simply not enough to maintain all of the research, education, and housing buildings and auxiliary facilities on the 26-acre island campus. Elsewhere on UH campuses, there would be several workers to cover this amount of space and infrastructure.

Likewise, our productivity and ability to manage extramural funding is hampered by a shortage of administrative support. We have been quite successful attracting funding, in fact, our extramural awards are double what they were several years ago. But we are now challenged in operationalizing these awards due to heavy procurement and contracting protocols. Unfortunately, grant funding cannot support sustained fiscal management. Our existing two administrative staff do not have the bandwidth to provide all of these functions for 25 highly productive researchers. There is a real risk we may not be able to fulfill all of our award obligations without additional support, thus jeopardizing future funding for our Hawai‘i-based research and education.

Finally, our website and social media presence are essentially our digital calling cards to the rest of the world, both here in Hawai‘i and abroad. Today’s funders and donors EXPECT premier research institutes to have modern, innovative, and forward facing online platforms. Community members and schools rely on this online information about our many educational programs, internships, and tours. HIMB has never had dedicated website support and at this critical time in which we are experiencing unprecedented growth, a full-time website specialist is especially important to our continued success.

Thank you for your consideration in appropriating these important positions for HIMB.

## HB 848 HD1 – RELATING TO HAWAI‘I INSITUTE OF MARINE BIOLOGY

Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support for HB 848, which appropriates funds for the following support staff positions at the Hawai‘i Institute of Marine Biology (HIMB):

- 1) Building Maintenance Worker II
- 2) Administrative Officer APT-B
- 3) Website specialist APT-B

As outlined in the bill’s language, HIMB is a world-class center of innovation for science and technology, place-based education, and indigenous resource management approaches, with a mission to advance understanding and stewardship of oceans and coasts locally and globally. HIMBs ~29 acre campus and associated facilities and programs provide direct benefits to local students and the State, are dependent permanent support staff and that possess the institutional knowledge to efficiently navigate the processes of the State and University of Hawaii. The purpose of this bill is to appropriate funds to establish new permanent support staff positions that are critical to sustaining daily operations for the initiatives at HIMB.

My name is Malia Rivera, and I submit this testimony as an individual, and thus it doesn’t not represent official testimony of the University of Hawai‘i.

I have been at HIMB since 2005, serving as a tenured faculty member whose work focuses on K-20 marine science education and training, with an emphasis on creating access to place-based marine science research experiences for Hawai‘i students and facilitating pathways to undergraduate careers in this discipline. The goal of my efforts is to increase representation in professional pathways amongst students from Hawai‘i with the hopes of bolstering local workforce development. As a kama‘āina who grew up in ‘Āhuimanu and a graduate of James B. Castle High School, the communities around Kāne‘ohe Bay and the bay itself are special to me and thus my work is of personal importance, as my own journey navigating this pathway presented many challenges and barriers as an underrepresented student in STEM at UHM.

Despite the gains in increasing the number of marine STEM programs such as the ones I have created at HIMB for our local students, I, and my colleagues at HIMB, remain significantly hampered by the extremely heavy administrative and non-discipline related workloads we as individual faculty and staff must endure at the institute, relative to our colleagues on the main campus. Because HIMB at Moku o Lo‘e is a campus unto itself, we have burdens (both actual and fiscal) as far as the physical plant maintenance, grounds caretaking and administration that most other units at the University need not worry about (or pay for). For example, although my main responsibility is to create and deliver education and training programs for Hawai‘i students, I estimate I spend ~ 50% of my time on administrative tasks because our existing administrative staff are incredibly overtaxed. Similarly, my program’s education and teaching staff have sometimes even undertaken building maintenance, janitorial and grounds related work, as HIMB

has not had sufficient coverage in these areas for as long as I can remember. We make do, but it comes at the expense of doing our primary jobs, that is, educating Hawai'i K-20 students in marine science. Our website and communications, which help the broader community gain access to HIMB information and programs and to better understand HIMB's important work in marine conservation science, are dated and obsolete because existing staff have no time to address or update it.

Funding for these support positions is critical to HIMB's mission and would be a first step to help offset the existing significant burdens on current faculty and staff so they can more efficiently do the important work they were actually hired to do, that directly benefits the State and our local communities.

Mahalo nui for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of this important measure.

**HB-848-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/15/2023 2:24:39 PM

Testimony for HRE on 3/16/2023 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Elena Bryant	Testifying for Kaneohe Bay Regional Council	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Mercado Kim and Members of the Committee on Higher Education,

I have been designated to provide testimony in support of HB848 on behalf of the Kaneohe Bay Regional Council (Council). HB848 would appropriate funds to establish new permanent support staff positions that are critical to sustaining daily operations for the initiatives at the Hawaii Institute for Marine Biology (HIMB). HIMB is a global hub for cutting-edge science and technology aimed at understanding and conserving tropical marine and coastal ecosystems. The Council supports the work HIMB is doing in Kaneohe Bay, and supports funding for permanent staff positions to continue this important work. As such, the Council respectfully requests that this Committee vote in favor of HB848.

Mahalo nui,

Elena Bryant

Kaneohe Bay Regional Council



# KO`OLAUPOKO HAWAIIAN CIVIC CLUB

March 15, 2023

To: Senator Donna Kim, chair, Senate Committee on Higher Education  
Senator Michelle Kidani, vice-chair, Senate Committee on Higher Education

Wednesday, March 15, 2003

From: Nancy Davlantes, Government Relations Committee

Subject: SUPPORT for HB848 HD2 – Relating to the Hawaii Institute for Marine Biology

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

Ko'olaupoko Hawaiian Civic Club writes in **STRONG SUPPORT** for the passage of HB848 HD2, which would provide funding for the hiring of three staff positions.

We are fortunate to have a close relationship with HIMB and has had the opportunity to see the incredible work the Institute does to advance understanding and stewardship of oceans and coasts, given the proximity of the 26-acre campus with high-quality lab facilities to a living coral reef. The Bay itself is a sacred wahi pana for the native Hawaiian community of Ko'olaupoko, and our club is very grateful for the work of HIMB to improve the health of Kaneohe Bay and its reef.

HIMB has done this with a very limited staff, but to expand its work it needs to expand its staff.

For this reason, we **STRONGLY URGE** you to pass this bill out of committee.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

*The Ko'olaupoko Hawaiian Civic Club was established in 1937 and is one of the largest in the Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs nationwide. Ko'olaupoko HCC is a not-for-profit community organization dedicated to preserving and perpetuating the history, heritage and culture of Native Hawaiians and providing leadership and scholarships. Its membership is open to people of Hawaiian ancestry and those who are "Hawaiian at heart."*

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