



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

‘ŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAII

Legislative Testimony

Hō'ike Mana'o I Mua O Ka 'Aha'ōlelo

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Higher Education and Technology
Wednesday, February 14, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.

By

Anna Wieczorek, Interim Dean
College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources

And

Michael Bruno, Provost
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

HB 2138 HD1 – RELATING TO AGRICULTURE EDUCATION

Chair Perruso, Vice Chair Kapela, and Members of the House Committee on Higher Education and Technology:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 2138 HD1 relating to agriculture education and appropriates funds to the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa for the College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (CTAHR), to establish an agriculture education coordinator position.

As mentioned in HB 2138 HD1, CTAHR convened the P-20 Agriculture Education Working Group, and the major recommendation contained in the group's final report to the 2019 legislature was the recommendation to appoint an agriculture education coordinator. This bill is a continuing attempt to act on that recommendation. We believe that the work done by the Working Group was highly collaborative and valuable, and that the need for such a program coordinator is justified.

The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and natural disasters have demonstrated that the State of Hawai'i must create a more sustainable agriculture industry to support local food production and a diverse agricultural economy.

If HB 2138 HD1 is passed and funded, this agriculture education coordinator will work across the University of Hawai'i system, Hawai'i Department of Education, as well as other members representing the original Working Group.

Better coordination of already existing agriculture education programs across the State, will provide a diversity of educational options to meet Hawai'i's needs to "grow more farmers".

Furthermore, by working together we will be able to increase the number of people in our State that will have the professional and technical skills to pursue employment opportunities in food and agriculture.

In summary, CTAHR supports HB 2138 HD1 provided that its passage does not impact priorities as indicated in our Board of Regents approved budget.

HB-2138-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/13/2024 9:10:15 AM

Testimony for HET on 2/14/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nicole Galase	Hawaii Cattlemen's Council	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The Hawaii Cattlemen's Council supports HB 2138 HD1



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 14, 2024

HEARING BEFORE THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION & TECHNOLOGY

TESTIMONY ON HB 2138, HD1
RELATING TO AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION

Conference Room 309 & Videoconference
2:00 PM

Aloha Chair Perruso, Vice-Chair Kapela, and Members of the Committee:

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

The Hawai'i Farm Bureau supports HB 2138, HD1, which appropriates funds to the University of Hawaii for the College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources to establish an agriculture education coordinator position.

It is commonly known that the average age of a farmer in Hawai'i is approximately 60 years old. For agriculture to be sustainable, and to produce more local crops we must cultivate the next generation of farmers and ranchers.

The Hawai'i Department of Labor and Industrial Relations undertook a series of facilitated meetings with farmers, ranchers, educators, and a diverse group of stakeholders across the state between 2007 and 2011 to address Ag Labor. The Hawai'i Agriculture Skill Panel Report was the result of the stakeholder meetings. The report made several recommendations, of which several common themes emerged. The number one theme was "Increasing youth education and training".

In 2013, the Hawai'i State Legislature saw fit to establish the Agriculture Workforce Advisory Board via HB 749 of that year. This Board convenes, in part, to execute the recommendations of the Hawai'i Agriculture Skill Panel Report. This board established a program by which educators and school administrators can be exposed and incentivized to adopt existing broad-based agricultural curriculums. This was an important step toward the future of agriculture in Hawai'i.

In 2015, Hawai'i State Senate Resolution No. 80 requested that the UH-Manoa College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (CTAHR) develop an "implementation strategy and recommendations for the creation of a statewide coordinated framework of

support for P–20 agriculture education, including any proposed legislation.” SR 80 sought to build upon the expertise of CTAHR and create a coordinated effort to address Ag education. It bears mentioning that CTAHR currently serves on the Ag Workforce Development Advisory Board.

HFB supports initiatives that help to educate and reconnect our children with agriculture. Through agriculture education programs, our children will gain an understanding and appreciation for agriculture which will result in healthier eating habits, stronger support for Hawai‘i’s agriculture industry, and will contribute to Hawai‘i’s food sustainability. We still have a long way to go to educate our children about agriculture. Creating an agriculture education coordinator position is another tool that will help in the education process. It is an investment to have well-informed consumers and supporters of Hawai‘i’s agricultural industry in the future.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



HIPHI Board

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JoAnn Tsark, MPH
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Native Hawaiian Research Office

HIPHI Initiatives

Coalition for a
Tobacco-Free Hawai'i

Community-Based Research &
Evaluation

Community Health
Worker Initiatives

COVID-19 Response

Environmental Health

Hawai'i Drug & Alcohol-Free
Coalitions

Hawai'i Farm to School Hui

Hawai'i Oral Health Coalition

Hawai'i Public Health Training Hui

Healthy Eating + Active Living

Kūpuna Collective/Healthy Aging &
Community Living

Public Health Workforce

Date: February 13, 2024

To: Representative Amy A. Perruso, Chair
Representative Jeanne Kapela, Vice Chair

Re: Strong Support for HB 2138 Relating to Education

Hrg: Wednesday, February 14, 2024, at 2:00 PM, Conf Rm 309

Hawai'i Public Health Institute (HIPHI) works to advance policy and systems change to reduce disparities and improve the health of Hawai'i residents. HIPHI is home to and testifies here on behalf of The Hawai'i Farm to School Hui, which collectively represents over 60 organizations from across the islands.

Hawai'i Public Health Institute (HIPHI) appreciates the opportunity to provide **Strong Support** for **HB2138**, which appropriates funds to the University of Hawai'i for the College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (UH CTAHR) to establish one full-time agriculture education coordinator position.

Following the passage of Senate Resolution 80 in 2015, the Hawai'i Farm to School Hui worked with UH CTAHR to convene the P-20 Agriculture Education Working Group to develop a coordinated framework of support for preschool through post-secondary (P-20) agriculture education in Hawai'i.

As outlined in the group's [final report to the 2019 legislature \(DC149\)](#) and provided for in HB2138, the Agriculture Education Coordinator position within UH CTAHR is essential to advance a coordinated statewide approach to regenerating Hawai'i's community food systems through regular and equitable access to agriculture and food systems education for all students.

This bill addresses the pressing need for immediate and sustained investment by the state in agriculture and food systems education to advance Hawai'i's food security and food self-sufficiency through the development of agriculture educators and future farmers.

Mahalo for considering this measure and for the opportunity to testify in support of HB2138.

Mahalo,

Dennis Chase
Hawai'i Farm to School Hui Program Manager
Hawai'i Public Health Institute



The House Committee on Higher Education and Technology
February 14, 2024
2:00 PM
Room 309

RE: **HB 2138, HD 1, Relating to Agricultural Education**

Attention: Chair Amy Perruso, Vice Chair Jeanne Kapela and members of the Committee

The University of Hawaii Professional Assembly (UHPA) appreciates the opportunity to testify in **support of HB 2138, HD 1**, relating to agricultural education.

HB 2138, HD 1, established one full-time agricultural education coordinator position within the College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (CTAHR). This bill will enable revitalization of agricultural programs, and allow for an increase of interest among youth to pursue agriculture and resource management professionally.

UHPA supports and encourages the committee to **pass HB 2138 HD1**.

Respectfully submitted,

Christian L. Fern
Executive Director
University of Hawaii Professional Assembly



Date: Feb. 13, 2024
To: HET
From: Climate Future Forum
Re: **STRONG SUPPORT for HB2138 HD1**
Hearing: Feb 14, 2024, 2pm

Aloha Chair Perruso, Vice Chair Kapela, and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Climate Future Forum, I'm writing to you in **strong support of HB2138**. Climate Future Forum (CFF) is a network of youth and adults dedicated to supportive climate policy and legislation. From an event held on December 9, 2023 at the Hawai'i State Capitol when youth and policy makers convened, a list of priority bills was agreed upon.

The mission of the **Climate Future Forum** (<https://www.climatefuturehawaii.org/>) is to inspire youth to be active and engaged participants in developing and advocating for climate policy and legislation. We do so by bringing together youth (ages 14-26), educators, policymakers, and nonprofits to evaluate and discuss climate action priorities and provide tangible steps to empower youth. Our hope is for youth to forge relationships with policymakers so that they can continue to work together throughout the legislative process in Hawai'i and beyond.

On December 9th, 2023, the Climate Future Forum was held at the Hawaii State Capitol. The event included over 80 youth, adults, legislators and staff members, and about 30 people from the community. One of the goals of this event was for youth to develop their legislative priorities for the 2023 legislative session. One of their priorities is centered around improving food systems. Therefore, CFF strongly supports this bill because by creating a coordinated food systems plan we will be able to:

- increase local food security through a coordinated approach
- achieve the state's goals for local food production and support local farmers
- diversify Hawai'i's economy by supporting a robust local food economy
- contribute to the local agricultural industry (new markets, more stability, more jobs)
- reduce food miles and associated greenhouse gas emissions

Please pass this bill out of your committee.

Mahalo nui loa,
Paul Bernstein on behalf of the Climate Future Forum

HB-2138-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/12/2024 6:42:57 PM

Testimony for HET on 2/14/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Caroline Azelski	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

In support of HB2138 HD1. Thank you.

HB-2138-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/12/2024 7:01:55 PM

Testimony for HET on 2/14/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Bernadette Kaleinani Tom	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

HB2138, in my opinion, should be supported by all Hawai'i residents because in the event of a catastrophe incident, we need to help feed our communities.

Also, Allowing the AOA, HOA, PUD communities, by amending the current HRS rules governing these private associations, to grow their own vertical plantiers within their limited common areas, without being in fear of retaliation by board members, to help each individual community to learn to be self-supporting and not fear of being attacked with legal actions.

It is our kuleana to help protect our way of life, help train those of us who lack the knowledge by helping it possible for all private property owners to learn to become mini farmer within our different communities. Please share the knowledge with those who want to learn to grow vegetables and fruits to sustain ourselves and each other. Thank you.

HB-2138-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/12/2024 7:35:57 PM

Testimony for HET on 2/14/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jennifer Lieu	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, I am delighted to offer my testimony in support of the crucial initiatives aimed at fostering the growth of future farmers and cultivating an educated agricultural workforce in Hawai‘i. The concerted efforts to increase the number of trained agriculture educators and enhance the quality of agriculture education programs in P-20 educational settings are paramount for the development of a robust agricultural sector. The commitment to boost the number of students entering and completing secondary and higher education and training programs in agriculture and food systems is commendable. The establishment of an Agriculture Education Coordinator position is a pivotal step in facilitating collaboration between CTAHR and agricultural stakeholders. This coordination ensures that academic programs align seamlessly with industry demands, promising not only better-prepared graduates for the workforce but also contributing significantly to the overall growth and sustainability of the agriculture sector. I wholeheartedly endorse these efforts and believe they will have a lasting positive impact on the future of agriculture in Hawai‘i.

HB-2138-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/12/2024 9:09:48 PM

Testimony for HET on 2/14/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Megan Conley	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB 2138. We need an agriculture education coordinator to support growth and sustainability of Hawaii farms and the agricultural workforce. Let's get serious about reducing Hawaii's dependency on exports. Mahalo.

HB-2138-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/13/2024 7:41:17 AM

Testimony for HET on 2/14/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Richard Collins	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I fully support this bill. Please pass this out of the committee. Mahalo

HB-2138-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/13/2024 7:48:19 AM

Testimony for HET on 2/14/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ronald Fujiyoshi	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Representatives,

I write to support this bill. I am a retired missionary and pastor living on a small 1.2 acre farm with my spouse on Hawai'i Island. I am convinced that Hawai'i can and should be growing enough food for our population. We have the land to do this. What we are lacking is the leadership. We have put all our eggs in the tourism nest and it is a mistake. An educator to help multiply the effects of agriculture is sorely needed. Please help to make this happen by passing this bill,

Mahalo for allowing me to testify.

HB-2138-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/13/2024 8:14:40 AM

Testimony for HET on 2/14/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Natasha Woodward	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

Hawaii could come to a place where they are locally producing most if not all of their food. In order to do this, we need to invest in education for agriculture and to train up many more farmers. Please support this bill for the food security of Hawaii.

Natasha

Honorable Members of the House Committee on Higher Education and Technology,

I am writing to express my wholehearted support for the Agriculture Education Coordinator (HB2138) currently under consideration. As an advocate for sustainable agriculture and a firm believer in the transformative power of education, I am convinced that this bill represents a crucial step towards fostering a more vibrant and resilient agricultural sector in Hawai'i.

Agriculture is the foundation of our food system. Yet, as our society continues to evolve, so too must our approach to agriculture. We face complex challenges such as climate change, soil degradation, and food insecurity, which require innovative solutions and a skilled workforce to implement them.

This bill seeks to address these challenges by establishing a dedicated Agriculture Education Coordinator position within our state's educational system. By doing so, it will ensure that future generations have access to comprehensive agricultural education that is both relevant and up-to-date. This includes not only traditional farming techniques but also emerging practices such as agroecology, permaculture, and sustainable livestock management.

Moreover, the Agriculture Education Coordinator will play a vital role in bridging the gap between the classroom and the farm. By facilitating partnerships with local farmers, agricultural organizations, and businesses, they will create valuable hands-on learning opportunities for students. This practical experience will not only enhance their understanding of agriculture but also prepare them for rewarding careers in the field.

Furthermore, investing in agricultural education is not just about securing our future food supply; it's also about empowering our communities and fostering economic development. By equipping students with the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in agriculture, we are investing in the prosperity of Hawai'i communities and creating opportunities for growth and innovation.

In conclusion, I urge you to support the Agriculture Education Coordinator Legislative Bill. By doing so, we can ensure that agriculture remains a vibrant and thriving industry in our state for generations to come. Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jean Butel".

Jean Butel

jeanniebutel@aol.com

HB-2138-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/13/2024 12:24:38 PM

Testimony for HET on 2/14/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lillian Coltin	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Agriculture Ed Coordinator will help grow more farmers and get Hawaii to be food secure

Mahalo

HB-2138-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/13/2024 4:17:41 PM

Testimony for HET on 2/14/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nancy Jones	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Peruso, Vice-Chair Kapela, and Honorable Committee Members:

I respectfully present this testimony to SUPPORT HB 2138, HD1, which provides funds to the University of Hawaii’s College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (CTAHR) for an agriculture education coordinator position. The CTAHR is a valuable repository of information for Hawai`i’s existing and future farmers, but if we are to decrease the increasing average age of Hawai`i’s farmers, we need to begin educating our future farmers in starting ideally at the primary school age level.

There appears to be a critical need identified for an Agriculture Education Coordinator, who could facilitate/arrange for: (1) Exposing students to agriculture education at all grade 9 levels in public, charter, and independent schools; (2) Public school students entering and completing the career and technical education agriculture, food innovation, and natural resources career pathway; (3) Students entering and completing higher education programs, apprenticeships, internships, and work-based learning programs in agriculture and food systems; (4) Teachers trained in agriculture and food systems education; and (5) Involvement of local food producers and other food systems professionals.

For these key reasons and in the interest of increasing the number of Hawai`i-based farmers and improving Hawai`i’s food security, we urge your Committee to please pass HB2138, HD1 and allow it to move forward during this Session.

Mahalo for this opportunity to present this testimony supporting HB2138, HD1.

Nancy A. Jones

PO Box 1462, Wai`anae, HI 96792 / Email: nancyhydroalt@gmail.com

HB-2138-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/13/2024 4:37:11 PM

Testimony for HET on 2/14/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Zeb Jones	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Peruso, Vice-Chair Kapela, and Honorable Committee Members:

I present this testimony SUPPORTING HB 2138, HD1, which would provide funds to the University of Hawaii’s College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (CTAHR) for an agriculture education coordinator position. The CTAHR is a valuable repository of information for Hawai`i’s existing and future farmers, but if we are to decrease the increasing average age of Hawai`i’s farmers, we need to begin educating our future farmers in starting ideally at the primary school age level.

A critical need has been identified for an Agriculture Education Coordinator, who could facilitate/arrange for: (1) Exposing students to agriculture education at all grade 9 levels in public, charter, and independent schools; (2) Public school students entering and completing the career and technical education agriculture, food innovation, and natural resources career pathway; (3) Students entering and completing higher education programs, apprenticeships, internships, and work-based learning programs in agriculture and food systems; (4) Teachers trained in agriculture and food systems education; and (5) Involvement of local food producers and other food systems professionals.

For all of the above reasons and in order to increase the number of Hawai`i-based farmers and improving Hawai`i’s food security, we urge your Committee to please pass HB2138, HD1 and allow it to move forward during this Session. Mahalo for this opportunity to present this testimony supporting HB2138, HD1.

Zebuel “Zeb” C. Jones

PO Box 1462, Wai`anae, HI 96792 / Email: zebbe3442@gmail.com