



# 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 & Technology  
February 8, 2023 at 2:15 p.m.

By

Kalbert K. Young

Vice President for Budget and Finance/Chief Financial Officer  
University of Hawai'i System

### HB 812 – RELATING TO THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII

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

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure, which appropriates funds to the University of Hawai'i (UH) for various university programs and projects. UH System supports the intent of the measure, provided that it can be affirmed by the specific academic programs that the funding is appropriate to deliver whatever the desired work product. I can not confirm the adequacy of the individual programs and projects identified in HB 812 as they were not vetted or requested by the UH nor were they approved by the UH Board of Regents.

The following table provides a breakout of the items in the bill along with the appropriation amounts for Fiscal Year 2023-2024 (FY24) and Fiscal Year 2024-2025 (FY25).

Description	Unit	FY24	FY25
Hawai'i Climate-Smart Commodities Program	CTAHR	\$ 6,670,000	\$ 6,670,000
STEM training through Hawai'i Space Flight Laboratory	SOEST	\$ 1,000,000	\$ 1,000,000
Center for Pacific Innovations, Knowledge, and Opportunities	JABSOM	\$ 3,000,000	\$ 3,000,000
Change Hawai'i Project and Hawai'i Mesonet Project	ESPSCOR & WRRRC	\$ 1,000,000	\$ 1,000,000
Prototype Designer Artificial Coral Reef Project	SOEST & ARL	\$ 125,000,000	\$ 125,000,000

UH System supports these programs and projects, as long as it does not conflict or override those items identified in the budget request approved by the Board of Regents at its November 17, 2022 meeting.

**Hawai'i Climate-Smart Commodities Program** - CTAHR has developed an interdisciplinary group of faculty focused on understanding soil health and how practices that increase soil health also lead to increased carbon sequestration and reduced emissions of greenhouse gases. In an approach often referred to as climate-smart agriculture (commodities), this faculty group is teaming up with growers around the state to sustainably measure, monitor, report and verify the carbon and greenhouse gas benefits associated with practices that increase soil health.

The UH-Mānoa **Hawai'i Space Flight Laboratory (HSFL)** builds, tests, and flies satellites with cutting edge science missions while engaging approximately 440 undergraduate students over the past five years. The Robotic Space Exploration Lab builds, tests, and encodes artificial intelligence into planetary surface vehicles, like rovers. Together, we train middle school students, high school students, undergraduates, graduate students, and educators across the state of Hawai'i in these advanced capabilities.

The **Center for Pacific Innovations, Knowledge, and Opportunities (PIKO)** is building a clinical and translational research (CTR) infrastructure to improve the health and wellbeing of Native Hawaiians, Pacific Islanders, and Filipinos and other medically underserved populations in Hawai'i.

**Change Hawai'i** is a project bringing together climate science and data science to address Hawai'i's most pressing climate-change-related research questions. This project will yield critically-needed new research on how Hawai'i's climate will change and what impacts it will have, for example on water resources and natural ecosystems. The Hawai'i Climate Data Portal (HCDP) will provide access to a comprehensive archive of historical and real-time climate data and serve as the basis for much of the work. The HCDP will benefit greatly from the data provided by the new cutting edge weather and climate monitoring network – The Hawai'i Mesonet.

**The Hawai'i Mesonet** is a statewide advanced weather and climate monitoring network of approximately 100 telemetered stations, now under construction. The data from the Hawai'i Mesonet is vitally important for a wide range of different uses, including weather forecasting, flood warning, fire warning, emergency management, water resource management, agriculture, ranching, cultural resource protection, ecosystem protection, recreation, and research on weather and climate, hydrological process, ecosystem processes, and many other topics. This network will become a major part of the infrastructure needed to support research, planning, and management for a climate smart future in Hawai'i.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure. We are ready to answer systemwide questions and questions regarding individual programs or projects may be best answered by the appropriate UH department.



**Papa Ola Lokahi**  
Nana I Ka Pono Na Ma

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**House Committee on Higher Education & Technology**

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

**Wednesday, February 8, 2023, 2:15 PM, Conference Room 309 & Videoconference**

**RE: HB 812 – RELATING TO THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII**

**Position: IN SUPPORT**

Dear Chair Perruso, Vice-Chair Kapela, and Members of the Committee of Higher Education & Technology,

Papa Ola Lokahi testifies **IN SUPPORT** of **HB 812**, which appropriates funds to the University of Hawaii for various programs and projects, which includes the Center for Pacific Innovations, Knowledge, and Opportunities (PIKO). The Center for PIKO is a collaborative partnership with Hawaii Pacific University, Chaminade University, and a statewide network of practice-based and community organizations. Papa Ola Lokahi supports its team-science approach to transform current research and paradigms to accelerate clinical and translational research to improve the health of Indigenous Pacific People (IPP), defined as Native Hawaiians, Pacific Islanders, and Filipinos.

Efforts such as PIKO, which are for our communities and by our communities, exemplify what is needed to move the needle forward on health outcomes for IPP. PIKO's commitment to the implementation and dissemination of community-engaged research looks to close the gap in IPP health disparities and take meaningful action towards health equity. Further, a center such as PIKO provides more opportunities for emerging IPP researchers to be supported and mentored in community-engaged and culturally responsive methodologies as they transition from their graduate programs and transition into their careers. Finally, a resource such as PIKO that supports and trains our next generation of researchers is necessary to create sustainable change in health outcomes for IPP communities.

For these reasons, we urge the Committee to pass HB 812 and invest in the health and well-being of IPP communities, as well as the development of future IPP researchers.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify **IN SUPPORT** of **HB 812**.

*Papa Ola Lōkahi, the Native Hawaiian Health Board, authorized by the federal Native Hawaiian Health Care Improvement Act, is charged with raising the health status of Native Hawaiians to the highest possible level, which we achieve through strategic partnerships, programs, and public policy.*



Testimony In Support of

**HB 812 RELATING TO THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII**

Aloha Rep. Perruso & Members of the Committee:

As Provost and Chief Academic Officer at Chaminade University of Honolulu, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to **provide testimony in strong support of HB 812.**

Specifically, I am writing to support the appropriations request for the Pacific Innovations, Knowledge and Opportunities (PIKO) program, funded by National Institute of General Medicine (NIGMS), and led by the University of Hawaii by Drs. Keawe Kaholokula and Neal Palafox.

PIKO is a collaboration led by the University of Hawaii with coordinating support from Chaminade University of Honolulu and Hawaii Pacific University. It's goal is to reduce health disparities among Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander and Filipino communities in particular while also bridging the considerable gap for researchers representative of these communities. All three participating universities have faculty and students engaged in projects funded by PIKO and in support of our shared goals for translational research in support of better community outcomes.

HB 812 would provide support for students to be more directly involved in this work through a new endeavor that places greater emphasis on engagement and partnership with community stakeholders. The Bill also provides opportunities for high school students to work with our undergraduate students and faculty alongside community leaders and organizations, which would allow them to gain valuable insights into their local community and provide tangible experience for future careers in support of their local ohana.

As Provost at Chaminade University, I wish to convey our strong support for this project and its proposed funding. Thank you for the opportunity to share our perspective on this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lance Askildson", written over a light blue horizontal line.

Lance Askildson, Ph.D.  
*Provost & Senior Vice-President*

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**HB-812**

Submitted on: 2/6/2023 6:42:48 PM

Testimony for HET on 2/8/2023 2:15:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Deborah Taira	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Committee Members,

My name is Deborah Taira and I am a health economist and professor at the University of Hawaii at Hilo at the Daniel K. Inouye College of Pharmacy.

I am testifying in favor of HB812.

This bill includes funding for the Center for Pacific Innovations, Knowledge, and Opportunities (PIKO). The center promotes and supports culturally responsive and community engaged research to improve the health of Native Hawaiians, pacific, islanders, Filipinos, and other medically underserved populations. It provides training to researchers and pilot project funding for studies that improve the health of the most vulnerable populations.

Thank you for your consideration. I ask that you support HB182.

Sincerely,

Deborah Taira

[dataira@yahoo.com](mailto:dataira@yahoo.com)

**HB-812**

Submitted on: 2/7/2023 10:40:44 AM

Testimony for HET on 2/8/2023 2:15:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Eunjung Lim	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

University of Hawaii received infrastructure grants called PIKO (Grant #: U54GM138062) and Ola HAWAII (U54MD007601) from the National Institutes of Health. Both PIKO and Ola HAWAII are aimed to lead and advance minority health and health disparities research in Hawaii and promote the development and facilitate the implementation of culturally responsive and community-engaged clinical and translational research aimed at improving the health and wellbeing of Native Hawaiians, Pacific Islanders, Filipinos, and other medically underserved populations. However, the budget of each grant was cut greatly - more than \$1,000,000 per year, which reduces the capability and activities from the originally proposed. Therefore, I testify to the need for additional assistant from the State of Hawai`i. Thank you so much for your time and support.