



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

‘ŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAII

Legislative Testimony

Hō'ike Mana'o I Mua O Ka 'Aha'ōlelo

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Higher Education
Thursday, January 30, 2025 at 3:05 PM

By

Parwinder Grewal, Dean
College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resilience

And

Michael Bruno, Provost
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

SB 663 – RELATING TO THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII COLLEGE OF TROPICAL AGRICULTURE AND HUMAN RESOURCES.

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

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB 663 relating to the University of Hawai'i College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources which appropriates funds to establish eight full-time equivalent (8.0 FTE) agricultural technician positions and four full-time equivalent (4.0 FTE) community coordinator positions.

We respectfully offer the following amendments: The title of the bill; SECTION 1., lines 2-3; and SECTION 2., line 11, and page 2, line 1, to correct the name of the college to university of Hawaii at Manoa college of tropical agriculture and human [resources] resilience (CTAHR). The renaming of the college was approved in October 2024 to better align CTAHR's name to its land-grant mission of improving the human condition and human use of natural resources through research, education and Cooperative Extension.

CTAHR's agricultural research and extension stations (CARES) provide crucial support for local farmers, ranchers, and communities, and its research and extension operations are hampered by a lack of permanent agricultural technician positions. These technicians are essential for conducting plant and animal experiments and demonstrations, as well as the upkeep of station facilities and equipment. Community coordinator positions facilitate the development of CARES as hubs of collaborative innovation and community prosperity through Talk Stories. Increasing technical and support staff for Extension agents increases the devotion of more time to educating and mentoring farmers and the communities of the CARES centers statewide.

We support SB 663 with the suggested amendments, provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities as indicated in our BOR Approved Budget.



**THE SENATE
KA 'AHA KENEKOA**

**THE THIRTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE
REGULAR SESSION OF 2025**

**COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION
Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Chair
Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Vice Chair**

**Thursday, January 30, 2025 3:05 PM
Conference Room 229 & Videoconference
State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street**

**RE: SB 663 – RELATING TO THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII
COLLEGE OF TROPICAL AGRICULTURE AND HUMAN
RESOURCES**

My name is Eric S. Tanouye and I am the President for the Hawaii Floriculture and Nursery Association. HFNA is a statewide umbrella organization with approximately 350 members. Our membership is made up with breeders, hybridizers, propagators, growers, shippers, wholesalers, retailers, educators, and the allied industry, which supports our efforts in agriculture.

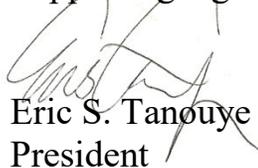
The Hawaii Floriculture and Nursery Association (HFNA) **STRONGLY SUPPORTS Senate Bill 663.**

It is important for our industry to have a properly staffed University of Hawaii College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resilience (CTAHR), as a valuable resource for our nurserymen and women. These positions will compliment our research and extension programs.



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

Supporting Agriculture and Hawaii,



Eric S. Tanouye
President

Hawaii Floriculture and Nursery Association



Hawaii Cattlemen's Council, Inc.

COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION
Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Chair
Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Vice Chair

SB663

RELATING TO THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII
COLLEGE OF TROPICAL AGRICULTURE AND HUMAN RESOURCES

Thursday, January 30, 2025, 3:05PM
Conference Room 229 & Videoconference

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

The Hawaii Cattlemen's Council **supports SB663** which appropriates funds for the University of Hawaii at Manoa College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources to establish eight full-time equivalent (8.0 FTE) agricultural technician positions and four full-time equivalent (4.0 FTE) community coordinator positions.

Our producers need access to best practices and up-to-date resources and CTAHR is one the main sources for this information. Our current issues of invasive species, drought, processing, and other challenges need the attention of dedicated agricultural technicians and community coordinators to address them and bring the solutions to our farmers and ranchers.

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

Nicole Galase
Hawaii Cattlemen's Council
Managing Director





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e-mail info@hfbf.org; www.hfbf.org

January 30, 2025

HEARING BEFORE THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

TESTIMONY ON SB 663
RELATING TO THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII COLLEGE OF TROPICAL
AGRICULTURE AND HUMAN RESILIENCE

Conference Room 229 & Videoconference
3:05 PM

Aloha Chair Kim, Vice-Chair Kidani, 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 SB 663, which appropriates funds for the University of Hawai'i at Manoa College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resilience (CTAHR) to establish eight full-time equivalent (8.0 FTE) agricultural technician positions and four full-time equivalent (4.0 FTE) community coordinator positions.

The excellent work performed by CTAHR for Hawai'i's farmers and ranchers cannot be overstated. The ongoing outreach and education are unparalleled in the State. Farmers and ranchers rely on this program for their success. CTAHR has helped develop and improve agricultural technologies pertinent to Hawai'i's farmers and ranchers. This includes intensive cover crop research, promoting the importance of locally grown produce, developing biological and cultural methods for controlling pests without chemicals, and the use of biological nitrogen fixation to significantly increase the production of high protein foods while at the same time reducing the need for commercially produced fertilizers.

Agricultural Technician positions and Community Coordinator positions are needed to successfully implement CTAHR's mission through CTAHR's Agricultural Research and Extension Stations (CARES) initiatives that:

1. Serve as hubs for area/region-specific agricultural research, education, and community engagement.

2. Support local farmers and ranchers and offer educational programs for all ages, from keiki to adults, that benefit communities statewide.

Agricultural technicians are essential for establishing and maintaining experimental and demonstration plant and animal trials and the upkeep of station facilities and equipment. Community coordinator positions connect CARES to the communities with education and farming opportunities for local families and keiki.

These positions provide support to CTAHR's Research and Extension Stations, local community resilience, and the state's highly valued agricultural industry, which is challenged by economically damaging pests, disease, climate, and production issues. They also provide agricultural and natural resources educational outreach and agriculture workforce development.

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



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Aloha Chair Kim, Vice Chair Kidani, and Members of the Senate Higher Education Committee,

The Hawai'i Farmers Union is a 501(c)(5) agricultural advocacy nonprofit representing a network of over 2,500 family farmers and their supporters across the Hawaiian Islands. **HFUU supports SB663.**

The appropriation of funds to establish eight full-time agricultural technician positions and four community coordinator roles is a strategic step towards bolstering the educational and practical support system for local farmers. These new positions will allow for more hands-on training and technical assistance, enabling local farmers to adopt innovative practices and improve crop yield and sustainability. This, in turn, supports the diversification and resilience of Hawaii's agriculture, reinforcing the state's commitment to food security and self-sufficiency.

Additionally, the community coordinator roles are crucial in bridging the gap between research and practice, facilitating outreach and extension services that directly benefit smallholder farmers and rural communities. These coordinators will play an essential role in disseminating vital information, organizing workshops, and fostering collaborations among stakeholders within the agricultural sector. By creating avenues for knowledge transfer and community engagement, SB663 will help cultivate a dynamic, adaptive, and sustainable agricultural landscape in Hawaii.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Hunter Heavilin
Advocacy Director
Hawai'i Farmers Union

SB-663

Submitted on: 1/29/2025 1:06:10 PM

Testimony for HRE on 1/30/2025 3:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ronald Weidenbach	Testifying for Hawaii Aquaculture and Aquaponics Association	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments: The Hawaii Aquaculture and Aquaponics Association (HAAA) supports SB663 which appropriates funds for the UHM College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (CTAHR) to establish eight full-time equivalent (8.0 FTE) agricultural technician positions and four full-time equivalent (4.0 FTE) community coordinator positions. The UHM is a national Land Grant College but support and funding for the foundational CTAHR that supports the Hawaii agriculture industry has been declining for decades. If Hawaii is to move forward from plantation era agriculture to modern diversified agriculture, and support our State's goal of increased food production and food security, then the College needs the requested funds to restaff its agricultural technician and community coordinator positions that are addressed by SB663. The HAAA respectfully requests that SB663 be passed to support this essential CTAHR staffing need.

SB-663

Submitted on: 1/29/2025 2:15:37 PM

Testimony for HRE on 1/30/2025 3:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Warren Watanabe	Testifying for Maui County Farm Bureau	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The Maui County Farm Bureau supports SB663. Please support and pass this measure.

Warren K. Watanabe, Executive Director

Maui County Farm Bureau

SB-663

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 3:06:29 PM

Testimony for HRE on 1/30/2025 3:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Pilialoa Callahan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I Pilialoa Callahan am in support of bill SB 663. I believe that it is a great idea, if the funds are available, to create positions within the university to complete research within the agricultural field and offer as many opportunities of education for the community to sustain themselves. With the growing threat of LFA and CRB on the rise. It is of the utmost importance that we find ways to deter them from eating our crops and the ways to continue growth on our 'āina. This is important work and should be of high priority for our nation. There are current programs available now that offer families the chance to grow their own food and I believe these positions can benefit from the data collected as well as offer more knowledge from future research to future programs that we as a lāhui can once again thrive in the agricultural field and the state can uphold its word to support the native Hawaiian and Hawaiian community as well as the 'āina in being self-sustaining. Mahalo nui.

SB-663

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 3:56:04 PM

Testimony for HRE on 1/30/2025 3:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Theresa M Thompson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support SB 663 RELATING TO THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII COLLEGE OF TROPICAL AGRICULTURE AND HUMAN RESOURCES.

Mahalo,

Theresa Thompson

SB-663

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 6:00:30 PM

Testimony for HRE on 1/30/2025 3:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
John R. Gordines	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

CTAHR technicians and extension agent positions are needed to complete projects and research plus connecting with our agricultural producers. Also provides jobs for our local community.

Kauai Aloha,

Johnny Gordines

SB-663

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 7:37:24 PM

Testimony for HRE on 1/30/2025 3:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jason Moniz	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testifying in support of this important agricultural Bill

SB-663

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 10:33:59 PM

Testimony for HRE on 1/30/2025 3:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Frederick M. Mencher	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

I support SB 663, which would provide funding for eight full-time equivalent agricultural technician positions and four full-time equivalent community coordinator positions at the U.H. College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources. U.H. CTAHR's research and extension services are essential resources for Hawaii's extremely diverse agricultural community, and its current staffing is minimal compared to the need if Hawaii's agricultural production is to grow significantly. I therefore encourage your committee to pass SB 663.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important matter.

Sincerely,

Frederick M. Mencher

SB-663

Submitted on: 1/29/2025 12:11:01 PM

Testimony for HRE on 1/30/2025 3:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Randy Cabral	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Strong support

SB-663

Submitted on: 1/29/2025 2:55:09 PM

Testimony for HRE on 1/30/2025 3:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
J Ashman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I stongly support this measure.

Thank you.

LATE

SB-663

Submitted on: 1/30/2025 9:14:10 AM

Testimony for HRE on 1/30/2025 3:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kevin Mulkern	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Kevin Mulkern Waimanalo Farmer & Nurseryperson