



# 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  
House Committee on Higher Education  
Wednesday, March 12, 2025 at 2:00 p.m.

By

Parwinder Grewal, Dean  
College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resilience

And

Michael Bruno, Provost  
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

### SB 865 SD1 – RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Chair Garrett, Vice Chair Amato, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of the intent of SB 865 SD1 relating to Agriculture that appropriates funds to establish a permanent Educational Support Associate position within the University of Hawai'i (UH) College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resilience's (CTAHR) Kona Cooperative Extension.

Coffee has emerged as an important cash crop for growers in Hawai'i. It has also become an important export commodity boosting Hawai'i's economy. CTAHR conducts research and provides research-based information to increase coffee production in the state and improve the economic viability of growers. Although coffee research plots exist at multiple CTAHR stations, CTAHR's Agricultural Research and Extension Station (CARES) in Kona currently has the sole Extension Agent engaged in applied research and outreach on coffee. Sustainability of coffee production is threatened by the Coffee Leaf Rust and Coffee Berry Borer and additional research and Extension capacity is needed to support the coffee industry throughout the state.

We strongly support the intent of this bill, and respectfully offer comments that it would be advantageous to have an Extension Agent position rather than an APT (Administrative, Professional and Technical) staff position that focuses on coffee, and other orchard crops with export potential such as macadamia nuts, cacao and tea to meet the needs of coffee and other orchard crops growers in the region and statewide.

We strongly support the intent of SB 865 SD1 with comments, provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities as indicated in our BOR Approved Budget.

**SB-865-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/7/2025 2:15:43 PM

Testimony for HED on 3/12/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Andrew Trump	Island Harvest Inc.	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am a second generation macadamia farmer working for Island Harvest writing in support of SB895. Island Harvest manages over 500 acres of orchard crops on the Island of Hawai'i. Orchard crops generate well over \$100 million dollars of revenue each year in the state, yet extension and research support for farmers is minimal due to the lack of adequate funding of positions at CTAHR. We ask that this bill be passed to support reseach and extension at CTAHR, and in turn, help our farmers.

Mahalo,

Andrew

**SB-865-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/7/2025 3:04:54 PM

Testimony for HED on 3/12/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Sharlene Gee	Bea's Knees Farm, LLC	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am a Kona coffee farmer and a Kona Coffee Farmers Association member testifying in strong support of SB865\_SD1, pertaining to an educational support associate position for coffee, etc. For years I have taken advantage of workshops, classes and field days, in-person and sometimes Zoom, to learn more about coffee pruning, nutrients, and dealing with coffee pests and diseases, established (beetle) and new (coffee leaf rust). The e-newsletter that is sent out is critical, my most valuable resource for staying abreast with the latest pertaining to coffee. It's timely, trusted, valuable information. I save them all and often reference them. It was very valuable to have the support staff fill in while the County Extension Agent was out on maternity leave. The workshops and field days have been better by having additional support, as well. We need this continual support. There is frequently something newly destructive that comes on rapidly, e.g., coffee leaf rust, banana bunchy top virus, and coconut rhinoceros beetle. It's imperative we farmers learn the latest and receive instruction on how to best respond. We're going to plant new trees. We want to know current best practices. Please fund this position and keep our trusted support.

**SB-865-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/7/2025 3:14:43 PM

Testimony for HED on 3/12/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Ryson Nakamasu	HC Farms LLC.	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hi,

My name is Ryson Nakamasu and I'm speaking on behalf of Honolulu Coffee Farms, where I am the operations manager. We are in favor of CTAHR having an educational support associate. It is not easy for one person to do regular farming chores and farm needs and then do office, class work or run educational activities for the public. It is unbearable for one individual to do these tasks alone, I know from personal experience.

We farmers need and utilize CTAHR , we rely on the research and resources they provide to the community. As the industry grows, so do the problems of invasive species(organisms) and pests that threaten our industry, therefore it is not possible for one individual to handle the research and provide education and deal with legislation on matters as an example, coffee leaf rust.

Please, if you need a visual reference, I'm willing to give you a tour on a coffee farm and provide a work visual of why SB865 is important to advance.

Mahalo for your time,

Ryson

**SB-865-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/8/2025 12:37:28 PM

Testimony for HED on 3/12/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Bill Dwyer	Hawaii Coffee Association	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Our organization strongly supports this bill. The farmers need the support of scientists to continue successfully farming their lands.

**SB-865-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/9/2025 9:03:18 AM

Testimony for HED on 3/12/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
James Kimo Falconer	Hawaii Coffee Growers Association	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Garrett, Vice Chair Amato and members of the House Committee on Higher Education.

I am writing in support of SB 865 SD1 and ask you to consider the need of the many crops the Kona Extension Office provides for. I speak on behalf of Coffee, but I know that this office sees to the needs of much more. This small financial ask is minor compared to the value of the industries they service.

Please join me in supporting this measure. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

**SB-865-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/9/2025 12:32:06 PM

Testimony for HED on 3/12/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Chris Speere	Maui Coffee Association	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The Maui Coffee Association supports the Appropriation of funds to establish a permanent Educational Support Associate position within the University of Hawai‘i College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resilience's Kona Cooperative Extension.

*Coffee has been grown on Maui for over 100 years and is undergoing a renaissance especially in the realm of large scale production and small farms and growers. Maui coffees have consistently scored well in the state Cupping Competitions sponsored by Hawaii Coffee Association. In 2024 Maui coffees were grouped with the highest average scores of all coffees in the state including those from Kona and Ka'u. Clearly top quality coffee is coming out of Maui and coffee quality is paramount when producing and maintaining a world-class Maui grown coffee.*

*From a financial perspective Hawaii is the most expensive growing region of the world. With the arrival on Maui of coffee leaf rust (2020) and coffee borer beetles (2016) the survival of the coffee industry in Maui Nui was placed at significant risk. The County of Maui-Office of Economic Development helped alleviate a portion of this risk through its 2020 funding of Optical Color Sorting Equipment currently for use by our local coffee growers. The final step to ensure the viability and sustainability of Maui Coffee is continued funding to support the educational needs related to the farming, processing, roasting, packaging and preparation of Maui Coffee to capture higher yields, maintain quality, and increase profit margins.*

*In 2024, a staggering 400 million cups of coffee are consumed each day. Each year, the average American spends \$1,097 on coffee. In today's coffee sector, increased consumption is a constant and permanent fixture, with an astounding level of growth achieved with every passing year.*

*The current estimated size of the Maui coffee industry is approximately 550 acres in production, with 500 acres harvested in Lahaina alone, yielding 2,475,000 pounds of coffee in annual production. With the addition of Mahi Pono entering the coffee market and planting 510 acres of coffee in 2019 Maui County will become the 2nd largest coffee producer in the State at an annual yield of approximately 5,000,000 lb. What follows are projections on how many pounds Maui farmers produce annually.*

Certainly, supporting an Educational Support Associate position within the University of Hawai‘i College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resilience's Kona Cooperative Extension is a viable use of State funds at such an important time in Hawaii's Coffee industry.





**SB-865-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/9/2025 3:17:25 PM

Testimony for HED on 3/12/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Miles Mayne	Kau Coffee Growers Cooperative	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**Testimony by Kau Coffee Farmers Cooperative in Support of Amended SB865\_SD1**

Dear House Representatives,

As representatives of the Kau Coffee Farmers Cooperative, we urge your support for SB865\_SD1 to address urgent staffing and funding needs critical to the sustainability of Hawaii's coffee industry.

In previous years, the coffee and orchard crop industries were supported by 4 permanent faculty and 6 permanent staff within CTAHR. However, faculty and staff numbers have decreased by approximately 75%, leaving only a minimal team at the Kona Research Station, along with one staff member employed on temporary grant funding. In November 2024, prior to Federal budget cuts, over \$260,000 was redirected from the USDA SCRI CLR grant outreach budget to other researchers and entities. This reallocation left the program with no funding for the final period of the grant (9/1/24–8/31/25), effectively cutting nearly half of the original budget. Consequently, the program now faces a \$66,000 shortfall for CLR project expenses and struggles to maintain its remaining staff. Without additional funding, the program risks having no staff support for the industries. These reductions in staffing and resources highlight the critical challenges of being understaffed, underfunded, and overstretched, which ultimately compromise the ability to provide adequate support to farmers, processors, and other stakeholders.

**The Importance of the Educational Support Associate Position**

- This permanent position is indispensable in ensuring that Hawaii's coffee industry—ranked as the state's third most valuable agricultural commodity—receives the necessary educational outreach, applied research, and pest management strategies to thrive.
- Without this position, the program faces a complete loss of staffing support, further impairing its ability to assist coffee farmers statewide in combating pests and diseases like CBB and CLR.
- Additionally, the macadamia nut and tropical fruit industries, which depend on the Extension program, would lose critical services due to the current inadequate staffing levels.

Since 2011, Andrea Kawabata's Extension program alone has brought over \$4.6 million in grant funding to CTAHR and serve as a critical resource for farmers. Despite these remarkable efforts, the loss of her only program staff due to insufficient funding threatens the industry's future.

**Urgency of Immediate Funding.** The proposed APT Educational Support Associate position mirrors the successful full-time, permanent APT staffing model provided by the UH-CTAHR SOAP program in 2018. Funding this position now, will alleviate the financial instability created by reliance on temporary grants, ensuring consistent and effective support for Hawaii's agricultural communities.

We respectfully request that SB865\_SD1 be amended to fund this position in the 2025 legislative session. The timely implementation of this Act is crucial for the continued success and sustainability of Hawaii's coffee, macadamia, and tropical fruit industries.

Thank you for your consideration and support of Hawaii's agriculture.

Sincerely,

Gloria Camba (President) & Miles Mayne (Director)

Kau Coffee Growers Cooperative, Pahala, Kau District.

**SB-865-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/10/2025 6:17:58 AM

Testimony for HED on 3/12/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jean Orłowski	Hala Tree LLC	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a coffee farmer in Kona managing 100 acres, CTHAR is very important for us. We go to them for any questions on new pests, new soil plans or anything that is related to our farm that seem out of the ordinary.

Without this position there would not be enough resource to help us. It is now more important than ever with coffee leaf rust, CBB, fire ants ... impacting our farms.

We are in full support for this bill.

**SB-865-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/10/2025 7:34:09 AM

Testimony for HED on 3/12/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Chad Cleveland	Ahualoa Family Farms	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

The UH-CTAHR's Kona Cooperative Extension has been essential to the success of Ahualoa Family Farms. Ahualoa Family Farms grows, processes, and creates value-added 100% Hawaii grown macadamia nut and coffee products. Therefore we strongly support SB865 so that our precious and important Hawaii ag industries can thrive. We are constantly fighting new challenges and must also be progressive to maintain a sustainable and economically viable ag industry, and the staff at UH-CTAHR's Kona Cooperative Extension do exactly just that. Ongoing research and technical support are the foundations of a successful agriculture system, therefore permanent full time staff are needed at the UH-CTAHR's Kona Cooperative Extension to support Hawaii agriculture. We would not be able to do what we do without their services and dedication. The knowledge and help provided is invaluable and absolutely instrumental to our business' success and future. We strongly support the passage of SB865 so that Hawaii's agriculture industry can continue to be saved and advanced with success.

**SB-865-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/10/2025 10:37:24 AM

Testimony for HED on 3/12/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Thomas Greenwell	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Greenwell Farms Inc. Strongly supports SB 865 SD1 and would appreciate your support as well. The Agriculture community in Hawaii is who keeps Hawaii beautiful and Green. With more invasive problems in the agricultural world the Kona Cooperative Extension needs additional Help by funding a full-time Educational Support Associate.

Tom Greenwell

Greenwell farms

**SB-865-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/10/2025 1:31:18 PM

Testimony for HED on 3/12/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
David Bateman	Heavenly Hawaiian Farms	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Garrett, Vice Chair Amato and Committee members,

Heavenly Hawaiian Farms **strongly supports** SB865 SD1.

We started farming Kona coffee over 20 years ago. CTAHR, Kona Research and Extension Center, has been our close ag/science partner for all these years. Anyone starting out on the Big Island with any kind of fruit or crop farming needs a government sponsored agency to educate and help new farmers with sage, reliable and knowledgeable advice about crop diseases, pests and related farming issues. CTAHR provides that valuable advice. We need them! CTAHR Extension staff have been running on inadequate budgets and staffing for years. They need financial help now. Again, our coffee industry and every other agricultural sector needs them. With over 1,000 coffee farms statewide and an estimated annual coffee farm gate of over \$70,000,000, supported by thousands of farm workers, and with many coffee farmers struggling to overcome challenging farming issues, funding this one additional staff research position at CTAHR is a very small state investment with a very large Return on Investment (ROI). The coffee farming industry, related staff and field jobs for our local residents, the State of Hawaii with its excise tax revenues and county government with its real property tax revenues, will all benefit from enhancing CTAHR's reserach staff.

We **strongly support** SB865 SD1 and ask for your favorable votes to pass this measure out of committee.

Mahalo nui,

Dave Bateman, President

Heavenly Hawaiian Farms

Holualoa HI

**SB-865-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/10/2025 4:32:51 PM

Testimony for HED on 3/12/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Lorie Obra	Rusty's Hawaiian	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

IN SUPPORT OF SB 865 SD1  
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

UH; CTAHR; Position; Establishment; Kona Cooperative Extension; Appropriations (\$)

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Members,

As co-founder of Rusty's Hawaiian, an award-winning coffee farm, mill and roastery in the Ka'u District on Hawai'i Island, I am very much in favor of SB 865 SD1. The proposed educational support associate position at CTAHR would provide vital assistance to our current extension agent. This additional position is crucial for maintaining and expanding the level of service that Hawai'i's coffee farmers need to remain competitive and sustainable.

Hawai'i's coffee industry faces challenges from two devastating threats: Coffee Berry Borer (CBB), one of the world's most destructive coffee pests, and Coffee Leaf Rust (CLR), one of the most severe diseases affecting coffee plants globally. However, we rely on just one extension agent who must also cover macadamia nuts and other orchard crops. This situation is severely inadequate for supporting Hawai'i's diverse and growing coffee industry.

I can tell you firsthand about the importance of CTAHR's extension program. Over the years, its agents' expertise has been instrumental in advising me and other farmers on essential aspects of coffee cultivation -- including planting, pruning, nutrition, and disease management. The success of my farming operation owes a great deal to the advice we receive from CTAHR. With the sobering realities of CBB and CLR, we need help from CTAHR more than ever.

Given the cutbacks in grants at the federal level, it's critical that the State fund this permanent educational support associate position. I urge you to advance SB 865 SD1 and increase access to the technical guidance we farmers need to thrive.

Sincerely,  
Lorie Obra

Co-founder  
Rusty's Hawaiian  
Ka'u District, Hawai'i Island







P.O. Box 253, Kunia, Hawai'i 96759  
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March 12, 2025

HEARING BEFORE THE  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

**TESTIMONY ON SB 865, SD1**  
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Conference Room 309 & Videoconference  
2:00 PM

Aloha Chair Garrett, Vice-Chair Amato, 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 865, SD1**, which appropriates funds to establish a permanent Educational Support Associate position within the University of Hawaii College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resilience's Kona Cooperative Extension.

The excellent work performed by UH 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.

An Educational Support Associate will provide support to CTAHR's Kona Extension Faculty who provide support for farmers and ranchers that produce coffee, macadamia nut, avocado, and other tropical fruits, and livestock, as well as assisting with coffee leaf rust and coffee berry borer, two-lined spittlebug, tree pruning, grafting, propagation, organic and conventional pesticides, and nematode management.

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

**SB-865-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/11/2025 8:06:40 AM

Testimony for HED on 3/12/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jane Tai	Hawaiian Goodness LLC	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We are in support of this measure as it is absolutely critical to ensure we have dedicated personnel to focus on the issues we face in the coffee and agricultural industry. A dedicated person in addition to the single ONE, e.g. 2 FTE is able to follow up on issues, plan a course of remedial action, provide educational consistency/continuity and informally instruct us on how to mitigate potential problems with our crops. As a local entrepreneur business, Hawaiian Goodness uses locally grown produce which coffee is a major component. We have been hard hit for the past several years and rely on the expertise of CTAHR to help us through the crises. It is a dis-service to have only 1 person and temporaries servicing our \$48.2 million industry - a 2nd FTE would definitely help and outreach to the broader community would be exponential. Please support this measure. The cost to place a permanent position is miniscule compared to the revenues which can be reaped for Hawaii State.

Aloha Esteemed Senators and Representatives,

I am writing on behalf of Kauai Coffee Company LLC. in full support of **SB865**. My name is Bronson B. Yadao. I am the Orchard Manager of a 3000-acre coffee plantation on the Westside of Kauai. As many of you know, Hawaii's coffee industry has been decimated by CBB (Coffee Berry Borer) and more recently CLR (Coffee Leaf Rust). Kaua'i was the last major growing region in the State (and world) to be infected by CBB and CLR. The discovery of both took place in 2020 and 2021 respectively.

Geographic isolation is a blessing in the sense that Hawaii's coffee industry was able to stave off both pests- decades, centuries after most of the prominent growing regions of the world. Now that the entire State has both major pests- geographic isolation is also a curse in the sense that industry experts predominantly reside thousands of miles away in Latin America, Africa, and Asia.

As it stands, UH CTAHR has a single extension agent with extensive coffee expertise residing in the Kona region of Hawaii island. Although Andrea Kawabata is very knowledgeable, capable and responsive- she is only a single professional- dealing with an ever-growing threat to the industry across the State.

I strongly support appropriating additional funding for much needed support for additional *expert staffing, educational events, applied research, travel for statewide outreach, equipment, and materials and supplies.*

Sincerely,  
Bronson B. Yadao  
Orchard Manager  
Kauai Coffee Company LLC.  
PO Box 530  
Kalaheo, HI. 96741  
(808)639-0839  
[byadao@kauaicoffee.com](mailto:byadao@kauaicoffee.com)



# Food+ Policy Internship 2025

[food@purplemaia.org](mailto:food@purplemaia.org)

March 11, 2025

Subject: SB865 SD1

Aloha Chair Andrew Takuya Garrett, Vice Chair Terez Amato, and Members of the House Committee on Higher Education,

Hawaii Food+ Policy supports SB865 SD1 to establish a permanent Educational Support Associate within CTAHR's Kona Cooperative Extension. This investment addresses gaps in agricultural education, support, and pest management.

CTAHR's 2014 analysis reveals 84% of coffee farms (516 operations) earn under \$10,000 annually on 1.67-acre plots, compared to nine large-scale farms generating over \$250K. CTAHR currently sustains these producers through pest management programs and on-site support; however, limited staffing restricts outreach to small farms and schools.

With only one extension agent and temporary grant-funded staff, 30-47% of grants now fund salaries rather than direct farmer resources. A permanent Educational Support Associate will: accelerate applied research on pest-resistant coffee cultivars and biocontrol methods; expand K-12 outreach; stabilize grant allocations; and strengthen small farms (<5 acres) with pest/disease management guidance and climate adaptation strategies

This role bridges CTAHR's research with on-ground needs, enhancing school gardens as STEM learning hubs while supporting coffee producers facing existential threats. Prioritizing permanent staffing ensures continuity in youth agricultural education and farmer field days—critical for an industry where 94% of operations are small-scale.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of SB865 SD1,  
The Hawaii Food+ Policy Team

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**The Food+ Policy internship** develops student advocates who learn work skills while increasing civic engagement to become emerging leaders. We focus on good food systems policy because we see the importance and potential of the food system in combating climate change and increasing the health, equity, and resiliency of Hawai'i communities.

In 2025, the cohort of interns are undergrads and graduate students from throughout the UH System. They are a mix of traditional and nontraditional students, including parents and veterans, who have backgrounds in education, farming, public health, nutrition, and Hawaiian culture.

**SB-865-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/7/2025 2:30:58 PM

Testimony for HED on 3/12/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Mary Robblee	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Kona agriculture needs this help. There are no where near enough people in the UH system, the State Department of Agriculture, or the State Department of Land an Natural Resources available in West Hawaii to adequately help or protect our farmers. We have CBB, CLR, ROD, LFA, Avocado Lace Big, Macnut Quick Decline Disease, mango issues, and the latest CRB.

The challenges are neverending, new ones are always nearby, but the level of assistance provided our farmers seems to have stagnated.

West Hawaii farmers need this assistance in order to stay on top of the latest recommendations for all the challenges they face. They need a heads up as to what is going to get in the state (past the couple of inspectors there are) and will have to be dealt at the landscape level.

Thank you for this opportunity to submit my thoughts on this important subject. West Hawaii farmers need help.

**SB-865-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/7/2025 3:01:39 PM

Testimony for HED on 3/12/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Gina Bagarino	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing to support SB865 that will fund a permanent full-time Educational Support Associate (APT) position with the UH/CTAHR/KONA CES office. This is for coffee and macadamia nut growers throughout the state, especially when facing new challenges with Coffee Berry Borer and Coffee Leaf Rust within the past few years. Assistance, guidance, and updates on this subject will provide productivity on their farm management. By having an APT, it will be a valuable support to assist with the current and new farmers in the area.

## **Testimony in Support of SB865 Relating to Agriculture**

### **Chairperson and Members of the Committee,**

My name is SongYi Paik, and I strongly support SB865, which seeks to establish a permanent educational support associate position within the University of Hawai'i College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources' (CTAHR) Kona Cooperative Extension and Applied Research Program. This position is essential to strengthening research, outreach, and farmer education efforts to address the critical challenges facing Hawaii's coffee industry.

Hawai'i's coffee industry is one of the state's most valuable agricultural commodity. However, coffee growers continue to face significant threats, particularly from two devastating pests:

1. Coffee Berry Borer (CBB): First detected in Kona in 2010, CBB has since spread to multiple islands, reaching Lāna'i in 2020. CBB infestations can cause severe yield losses, particularly when harvests are delayed (Barrera, 2008)<sup>1</sup>. Effective management requires continuous farmer education, research, and outreach to ensure the adoption of best practices.
2. Coffee Leaf Rust (CLR): First detected in Hawaii in 2020, CLR has now spread to Maui, Hawai'i Island, O'ahu, and Lāna'i. CLR leads to premature leaf drop, weakening plants and significantly reducing coffee cherry production. Further research is urgently needed to identify resistant coffee varieties, assess their viability for Hawaii's unique growing conditions, and educate farmers on effective management strategies.

Despite the industry's statewide presence, coffee growers are underserved due to geographic remoteness and the limited capacity of existing CTAHR personnel. Establishing a permanent educational support associate position will provide much-needed assistance to extension faculty, enhance community outreach, and bolster research efforts aimed at mitigating CBB and CLR.

This position is not just an investment in research and education; it is an investment in the sustainability of Hawai'i's coffee industry. I respectfully urge the committee to support SB865 and ensure that coffee growers across the state receive the assistance they need to protect their livelihoods and maintain the legacy of Hawai'i-grown coffee.

I appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony in support of this important measure.

Sincerely,

SongYi Paik  
Assistant Extension Agent  
College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resilience  
University of Hawaii

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<sup>1</sup> Barrera J. F. 2008. Coffee pest and their management. In. Capinera J. L. (Ed). Encyclopedia of Entomology. 2nd edition. Springer. Pp. 961-998.

**SB-865-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/7/2025 4:28:50 PM

Testimony for HED on 3/12/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Carolyn Witcover	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this Bill for much needed funding for an additional position at the Kona Extension Office. More positions are needed in fact and not fewer. The office supports hundreds of farmers and it is not feasible for one person to do that. Please support those who support Hawaiian agriculture. Their support is critical to our financial well-being and taking care of our farms.



**SB-865-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/7/2025 5:33:36 PM

Testimony for HED on 3/12/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jolani shrinski	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am a senior solo Coffee and Avocado farmer. I rely greatly on the CTAHR knowledge to successfully operate a successful farm. The office provides me with information on fertilizing both crops, control of coffee berry borer and fungus and Avocado lace bug and fungus. Pruning coffee, harvesting and processing issues. Soil and leaves sample results and they tell me how to remediate deficiencies with the Right amount and type of fertilizer. They teach me how to use pesticides safely, Joe to mix small batches of the pesticides and fungicides. They provide classes on the latest studies on the avocado lace bug treatments and the coffee leaf fungus, which are new problems in the field that we face. I would fail this farm, without the education that I receive from them. Successful farming is a vast value to the State and country. I support the passing of this bill.

**SB-865-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/7/2025 6:06:18 PM

Testimony for HED on 3/12/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Luis F Aristizabal	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Members

House Higher Education Committee,

As a coffee farmer and as an Independent Consultant on coffee production in Hawaii over 8 years, I found very valuable the professional service provided by the Kona Cooperative Extension (University of Hawaii at Manoa) to the coffee industry. During the last decade, coffee farmers had faced the two major pests reported in all coffee producer regions around the world, (the coffee berry borer and the coffee leaf rust). Effort addressing those issues had been conducted by Federal, State agencies and the coffee farmers associations to develop integrated pest management (IPM) strategies adapted to Hawaiian coffee agroecosystems. However, without the participation of the extension agents (Kona Cooperative Extension) it is impossible to deliver alternatives of control than help farmers to suppress those pests and to improved the coffee production systems. Therefore, it is relevant to include a full-time position (Educational Support Associated) to reinforce the professional service provided by the Kona Cooperative Extension.

We have limitation on Agricultural professional working in Hawaii coffee industry, I hope this position will be approved. Coffee farmers need training and technical support.

Best regards!

Luis F. Aristizabal

**SB-865-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/8/2025 5:27:01 AM

Testimony for HED on 3/12/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Harriet Taniguchi	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am support of this bill. It funds a critical position which assists small farmers with how to effectively operate a coffee and tropical fruit farm. Also assists farmers with disease resistant trees and plants. The position definitely supports and enables small female owned farmers succeed.

Mahalo.

**SB-865-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/8/2025 9:13:21 AM

Testimony for HED on 3/12/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
HC Bittenbender	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I Harry Bittenbender support this bill SB865.

The educational specialist position will fit into a very effective hard working extension program dealing with the two most important crops - coffee and macadamia-in Kona and the Big Island. Coffee is facing two serious problems- coffee berry borer and coffee leaf rust. Effective solutions are only now available making educating farmers to use new technology so important. With the Federal govt. reducing support for agriculture, USDA, and UH this position is even more important.

I led the UH coffee extension program for over 30 years this a very critical time.Making state support critical for our farmers and UH agricultural outreach (extension) effort.

Thank you for your support of SB865.

**SB-865-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/8/2025 12:34:29 PM

Testimony for HED on 3/12/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Alla Kostenko	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am a coffee farmer in Ka'u and strongly support this bill. We need the support of scientists with farming.

**SB-865-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/8/2025 4:02:19 PM

Testimony for HED on 3/12/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Daeus Bencomo	Mahilani Partners LLC	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support the passing and approval of Bill SB865\_SD1

CTAHR has been a tremendous resource for me as a farmer and with the success of my agribusiness. Andrea Kawabata and her team have been invaluable for me as a resource, training aid, and valuable support with connecting farmers and creating viable seed stock to help combat the adversities of growing coffee in Hawaii.

**SB-865-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/9/2025 8:11:05 AM

Testimony for HED on 3/12/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Debbie Donald	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As I have previously written, running my small family farm, by myself, would be nearly impossible without the assistance of Andrea and Matt. Failing to fund Matt's position is a road to failure for small farmers on Hawaii Island.

**SB-865-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/9/2025 11:03:17 AM

Testimony for HED on 3/12/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
A'ja Q Bencomo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I'm in support for this bill because we grow coffee through Hilo Coffee Company and Andrea Kawabata and her support staff have been critical in our success by provide with us knowledgeable trainings and is an invaluable resource.



**SB-865-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/9/2025 12:23:23 PM

Testimony for HED on 3/12/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
William C Wakefield	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony for Bill SB 865

Dear Honorable Senators, March 9, 2025

Our ‘ohana has four small successful farms in Kona on the Big Island. We organically farm mango, citrus, and turmeric/olena. We also grow coffee and avocado on our Bishop leasehold farm. *My husband and I have been farming in Kona for about 40 years. We use the UH College of Tropical Agriculture extensively!* They have been an invaluable resource, and we know that we wouldn’t be as successful if it weren’t for their help and advise, especially helping us battle multiple invasive pests and the nutritional needs of our diverse crops. We derive 100% of our income from farming and now our son and his family are benefitting, also, along with our state’s hard working fellow farmers. With our state encouraging food sustainability, and with the growth and potential growth of agriculture in Hawaii right now, we feel that it is imperative to have as much agricultural support as possible and feel that having a permanent educational support associate to support our one extension agent will make a difference.

PLEASE support Bill SB865, appropriating funds to establish a permanent Educational Support Associate position within the University of Hawai‘i College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resilience Kona Cooperative Extension. This will help secure the future of farming here, and will not only impact Hawaii’s economy, the next generation of young farmers, but also the livelihood and lifestyle of our island’s communities.

Sincerely and with much aloha,

William and Helen “Brooks” Wakefield

Wakefield & Sons, Inc. DBA Wakefield Organics, Ho’omalulu Farm, Pea Nani Farm

PO Box 1454, Kealahou, Hawaii 96750

**SB-865-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/9/2025 1:09:20 PM

Testimony for HED on 3/12/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Andrea Kawabata	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Representative Garrett, Representative Amato, and members of the Higher Education Committee,

My name is Andrea Kawabata and I am a UH-CTAHR Extension Agent working with coffee statewide and the tropical fruit and macadamia nut industries in West Hawaii. I write to you in **STRONG SUPPORT for SB865\_SD1** which appropriates funds to establish a permanent Educational Support Associate position within the University of Hawai‘i College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resilience’s Kona Cooperative Extension.

**Respectfully, I strongly urge you to amend SB865\_SD1 so it is funded this (2025) legislative session.** Without this permanent position, my extension program will be crippled and I will not be able to sustain the level of outreach and applied research needed for producers to remain sustainable and in business. While the coffee industry battles Coffee Berry Borer (CBB), the most damaging insect pest of coffee, and now, Coffee Leaf Rust (CLR), the world’s most economically devastating coffee disease, my program does not want to let the farmers down and would like to continue serving farmers and other stakeholders to the best of our ability.

HDOA currently ranks **coffee as the #3 most valuable agricultural commodity in Hawaii.** And yet, extension support for this important industry continues to shrink. Historically and prior to the arrival of the CBB and CLR, Hawaii’s coffee industry was supported by two full-time Extension agents, one Extension specialist, one researcher, and six research station technicians - all permanent positions. Today, my position is the only Extension position dedicated to coffee and Kona Research Station’s two research technicians divide their time between the Kona and Mealani Research Stations and other non-coffee projects. Any and all coffee and orchard crops Extension program staff are temporarily and 100% funded through grants.

The **macadamia nut industry is ranked as Hawaii’s #7 most valuable ag commodity and the tropical fruit industry continues to grow.** While there *was* one Extension specialist and one Extension agent dedicated to macadamia and cacao island-wide, and tropical fruit in East Hawaii, this husband and wife team left in 2020 and these full-time, permanent positions have not since been filled. And so, these crops fell back to my program.

In the past, 4 permanent faculty and 6 permanent staff were dedicated to the coffee and orchard crop industries. Today, CTAHR faculty and staff has been reduced by about 75% with just myself, Nick and Bevin at the Kona Research Station, and Matt who is hired on temporary grant

funds. Additionally, this past November 2024 (prior to the Federal cuts) and without any personal communications from the project director, over \$260,000 from my USDA SCRI CLR grant outreach budget was diverted and given to researchers and other entities, leaving me with ZERO funding for the final period (9/1/24-8/31/25) of the grant. Nearly half of my total contracted budget was swept. Because of this action by the PI, I now have over \$66,000 in budget shortfall for CLR project expenses and a dedicated staff (Matt) who I am desperately trying to keep employed. If funding doesn't come through, my program's staff support for the industries will be reduced to ZERO. These numbers tell a story that **we are understaffed, underfunded, and spread too thin** and as such, we cannot provide the adequate support that farmers, processors, and other stakeholders should be receiving.

**If you consider how important secretaries are to an office, their positions parallel the importance of staff to an Extension program.** Since 2011, my program has brought in more than \$4.6 million to CTAHR and a pending total of approx. \$11 million. Together, staff and I have conducted hundreds of workshops, webinars, and field day events statewide and I can tell you first-hand that a second person is critical for event set-up, moving tables, chairs, putting up and breaking down tents, traveling with multiple luggages filled with educational booth display items, posting flyers, interacting with growers during public events, creating a monthly newsletter, posting events and announcements online, sending reminders to participants, moderating the chat and muting participants during webinars, taking photos and videos, maintaining demonstration field plots, etc. My current temporary staff is so dedicated and well-versed that he was able to apply for a Jr. Extension Agent position to take on some of my duties while I was on maternity leave so that farmers would continue to receive program support and recommendations while I was away.

Our program is one of high output and impact and we would like the opportunity to continue to do so. We have helped coffee growers statewide develop and implement an IPM for CBB control which has been successful at lowering beetle damage rates from 40% to less than 5%. We provided outreach on CLR prior to its arrival and so when it was first found in Maui, we were able to help with its identification and published alerts, field guides, and sanitation and management recommendations immediately. We still have a lot of work to do with CLR but are gaining ground as research is finalized. Our own applied research projects have given coffee farmers additional tools for controlling CBB (with Delegate WG, pruning, etc.), coffee root-knot nematode (with 'Meisner' rootstock, replant strategies, etc.), and CLR (with 'Ito' Catimor hybrid - the first vetted, CLR-resistant trees distributed to farmers, control recommendations, etc.). **Much of this work would not be possible without staff support and none of it can be done without funding from at least three grant-funded projects annually.**

In closing, the APT position described in SB865\_SD1 will support Hawaii's top agricultural commodities and help my program focus on what's important - Hawaii's farming community. With this position, we hope to mirror the UH-CTAHR SOAP program with their full-time, permanent APT provided by legislature in 2018 and **seek to build capacity to better support the coffee, macadamia, and tropical fruit industries one valuable STAFF member at a time.** And, while I would still seek grant funding to support and conduct educational outreach and

applied research throughout the state, this permanent position would greatly alleviate the headache and heartache of letting farmers down because of the decision of others who do not appear to have Hawaii's agricultural industries in their best interest.

**I humbly ask that you support an amended version of SB865\_SD1 that would approve and fund the position in 2025.** Thank you for taking the time to read my email and to hear my plea.

Sincerely,  
Andrea Kawabata  
Extension Agent for Coffee and Orchard Crops  
Kona Research and Extension Center  
79-7381 Mamalahoa Highway  
Kealahou, HI 96750

**SB-865-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/9/2025 1:25:43 PM

Testimony for HED on 3/12/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Alyson Gordon	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Rep. Garrett and members of the higher ed committee,

Please accept my testimony in full support of SB865\_SD1. I am a fruit grower in Kona and humbly ask that the committee also support the measure and amend it to fund the position in 2025, and not 2050. The industries that this staff position will support face devastating pests, diseases, and other challenges and we, the farmers, are in need of help from CTAHR's extension program.

Thank you!

**SB-865-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/9/2025 3:02:05 PM

Testimony for HED on 3/12/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Ken Love	hawaii tropical fruit growers	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Representative Garrett, Representative Amato, and members of the Higher Education Committee,

My name is Ken Love and I am the Executive Director of the Hawai'i Tropical Fruit Growers. I write to you in STRONG SUPPORT of SB865\_SD1 which appropriates funding to establish a permanent Educational Support Associate (APT) position within UH-CTAHR's Kona Cooperative Extension in support of the coffee, mac nut, and tropical fruit industries.

This position is needed to support the only extension agent who serves these extremely important crops that help to feed our state and contribute over \$80 million to Hawai'i's economy, farmers and communities. I emphasize that this position is NEEDED NOW when the agent's extension program is challenged to support the industries with devastating pests and diseases such as avocado lace bug, coffee leaf rust, coffee berry borer, macadamia felted coccid, Queensland longhorn beetle, anthracnose, phytophthora, etc.

I urge you to please support SB865\_SD1 by approving this bill and amending it to be funded on July 1, 2025 so that services are not interrupted during this critical time. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Ken Love

Executive Director

Hawai'i Tropical Fruit Growers

PO Box 1162

Captain Cook, HI 96704

**SB-865-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/10/2025 12:09:16 AM

Testimony for HED on 3/12/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Carol Okamura	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As Kona farmers who produce coffee, avocado, and macadamia we face continual challenges to all of our crops be it insects or diseases,. What is alarming is that they are occurring with increasing frequency. More and more we need and depend on the extension service for help and advice. Recently we purchased rust resistant coffee cultivars that were grown, tested, and cupped by Andrea and her colleagues. It's this kind of technical expertise translated from scientific data that is most useful to us as farmers. This research is time consuming but is more effective, less expensive and better for the environment. As I understand it, Andrea was able to do this only through grants. With all of the crops that Andrea must cover, SB865 would provide the necessary help which allows us to maintain our farms in the most sustainable way. Thank you. Carol Okamura



**SB-865-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/10/2025 11:57:28 AM

Testimony for HED on 3/12/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Mark Takizawa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a long time coffee farmer in South Kona I've been utilizing the resources of CTAHR which have been instrumental in the survival of the coffee and mac nut industry here in Hawaii, sadly this office has very little support both on the state and federal levels, making us small Hawaii farmers feel insignificant in the broad picture of U.S. agricultural. I feel more full time positions need to be established immediately to help us to sustain a fruitful future for agriculture in Hawaii.

**SB-865-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/10/2025 4:44:00 PM

Testimony for HED on 3/12/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Juli Satoh	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Legislators,

I am submitting my suport for SB865 for your review. As a new coffee farmer in a time when growing coffee is more challenging than it has ever been, I find having the benefit of the educational suport provided by CTAR a tremendous advantage. Having a knowledgable persopn, with out commercial bias, to reach out to with questions and for advice has made a huge differnce in getting my farm on the track to running efficiently. Thank you, Juli Satoh

**SB-865-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/11/2025 8:07:24 AM

Testimony for HED on 3/12/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
bobbie becker	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am a coffee farmer on Maui. I have relied on the information and teachings from the UH-CTAHR's Kona Cooperative Extension office for over fifteen years. In the past decade the information and research that has been collected and disseminated by this office has been increasing and VITAL to the future survival of Maui's burgeoning coffee industry. Please approve the funding for a full-time Educational Support Associate (APT) position.

Thank-you.

Bobbie Becker, owner Maui Mountain Coffee Farm

**SB-865-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/11/2025 8:07:33 AM

Testimony for HED on 3/12/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Mark Shultise	LavaRock Farm	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill.

**SB-865-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/11/2025 8:08:42 AM

Testimony for HED on 3/12/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Gary Bachmann	South Kona Estate	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill.

**SB-865-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/11/2025 8:35:57 AM

Testimony for HED on 3/12/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jensen Uyeda	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair Garrett, Vice Chair Amato, and committee members, my name is Jensen Uyeda. I am submitting testimony as an individual in support of bill SB865, which would appropriate funds to establish a permanent Educational Support Associate position for CTAHR's Kona Cooperative Extension. I currently serve as a CTAHR Extension Agent on Oahu, working with edible crops, and I understand Cooperative Extension's vital role in our communities.

Cooperative Extension plays a crucial role in sharing science-based information through non-traditional educational programs for the agricultural community. The Kona extension programs serve the coffee industry on Hawaii Island and across the state. This industry ranks among the highest-grossing agricultural sectors, generating over \$48 million. In recent years, it has faced significant production challenges, notably from coffee berry borer (CBB) and coffee leaf rust (CLR), which may lower yields and raise production costs. The educational programs offered by the Kona Extension have been essential for growers' success in addressing these obstacles. However, the program's capacity is limited, featuring only one extension agent and a temporary grant-funded educational support associate. Securing funding for a permanent position would enhance the extension program's capability to prioritize research and educational initiatives statewide. Moreover, it would bolster the program's capacity to manage the Kona research station, where much of the research focuses on developing strategies to counteract the issues caused by CBB and CLR.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

**SB-865-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/11/2025 8:44:23 AM

Testimony for HED on 3/12/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Howard Hill	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in support of sb865 sd1.

I am a small farmer in Kona, Hawai'i. My products are Kona coffee and Sharwil avocados which I have produced for more than 30 years.

Agriculture production in West Hawai'i continues to increase with ever more plantings of coffee tree occurring each year. Avocados also have a great potential for expanded production as we have very high quality fruit.

That said, we have a problem, or actually many problems, Recently introduced pests and diseases have made it very difficult to continue to produce quality products. We need continued education, research, and in field assistance to help farmers produce and expand production, of these very desirable products.

Therefore, I ask for Legislative support for this bill which will provide additional help for our Extension Office and thus help continue West Hawai'i to be a valuable agricultural producer for the State of Hawai'i and the world.

**SB-865-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/11/2025 8:45:48 AM

Testimony for HED on 3/12/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Tracie K Matsumoto	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Hawaii Senate members and staff,

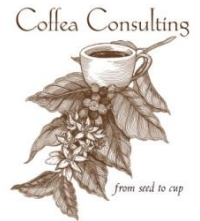
I would like to express my support for this important position for Hawaii farmers. With the introduction of new diseases higher costs of fertilizers and other inputs, farmers need the extension support to work more efficiently to become profitable. This position will fill this important need immediately. Please grant the funding for this position for this fiscal year.

Best wishes,

Tracie



## Testimony for SB865-SD1 – Support



March 11, 2025

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To:  
COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION  
Representative Andrew T. Garrett, Chair  
Representative Terez Amato, Vice Chair

Aloha e Committee,

I am testifying in favor of SB865.

There are more farms growing coffee in Hawai'i than any other crop. It is a crop that forms part of Hawai'i's agricultural identity and one that provides economic opportunities in the state and significant agricultural income for the state (it is one of the highest valued crops in the state, [https://www.nass.usda.gov/Quick\\_Stats/Ag\\_Overview/stateOverview.php?state=HAWAII](https://www.nass.usda.gov/Quick_Stats/Ag_Overview/stateOverview.php?state=HAWAII)).

As there is now but one extension agent supporting coffee- at a time when growing coffee is more challenging than ever before- providing support to that agent is essential.

Please, pass this bill.

A handwritten signature in purple ink, which appears to read "Shawn Steiman". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Shawn Steiman, PhD.  
Author, *The Hawai'i Coffee Book: A Gourmet's Guide From Kona to Kaua'i*  
Owner, Coffea Consulting  
Owner, Grok Coffee

TESTIMONY OF STUART T. NAKAMOTO  
Extension Economist/Specialist at UH-CTAHR

BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

MARCH 12, 2025  
2:00 PM  
CONFERENCE ROOM 309

SENATE BILL NO. 865, SD1  
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE.

Chair Garrett, Vice Chair Amato and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill 865. My name is Stuart T. Nakamoto. I am an Extension Economist/Specialist at the UH-CTAHR however I am testifying on my own behalf and not the CTAHR. I strongly support SB865.

The reasons enumerated in the measure explain the rationale behind this request and the economic benefits of the coffee industry to the state. I would like to elaborate on some points.

The bill references a crop value of \$48.2 million, which is right after harvest at the farmgate. When value is added by further processing to green coffee (the stage before roasting) that crop is worth over \$67 million, while still at Hawaii agricultural operations. This revenue supports producers, their families, and their communities. Very importantly, coffee contributes much to the visitor industry and Hawaii's economy.

All with one agent. Moreso, the coffee industry is at a critical juncture -- external funding support is being cut just when assistance is needed to cope with Coffee Leaf Rust, Coffee Berry Borer and other pests.

I humbly ask that you support Senate Bill 865.

Thank you for the opportunity to present my testimony.

**SB-865-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/11/2025 9:48:50 AM

Testimony for HED on 3/12/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Harold M Hoogasian	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The Kona agricultural community needs this support.

Harold M Hoogasian

konaperfect.coffee

75-5525 Kealia Street

Holualoa, HI 96725

**SB-865-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/11/2025 9:55:55 AM

Testimony for HED on 3/12/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Una Greenaway	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee:

Thanks for the opportunity to testify on this bill. We in the Kona districts desperately need this extra cooperative extension position. This has become even more evident as the USDA and NRCS are being cut in front of our eyes. Please do the pono thing.

Mahalo, Una Greenaway

Kuaiwi Farm

**SB-865-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/11/2025 12:25:55 PM

Testimony for HED on 3/12/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Marcia Nora	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a coffee farmer its great to have a resource to get information. I know the current group is overwhelmed with inquires and needs more people

**SB-865-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/11/2025 4:48:01 PM

Testimony for HED on 3/12/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Reggie Hasegawa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Reggie Hasegawa supports this important bill for the sake of the coffee growers in hawaii. The hawaii coffee industry needs support from the state to provide the farmers how to grow a quality coffee crop. We face a huge challenge in being able to educate the coffee farmers in the state the importance of growing and processing a quality crop. Without this position the farmers will lose a huge support team and the coffee industry will have a difficult time to achieve this goal. I have worked over 40 years in the agricultural business and now is the pivitol time to provide this needed support!! I truly hope you are able to fund this more important bill to help the coffee growers in hawaii be successful and move to the number one ag commodity in the state!!! Aloha!!!

**SB-865-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/11/2025 8:36:57 PM

Testimony for HED on 3/12/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Susan Collins	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Historically, all staff providing education and support for the coffee industry on the Big Island, have been employed temporarily, grant-funded. The coffee industry (#3 agricultural commodity in Hawaii) statewide, and the macadamia nut (#7) and tropical fruit industries in West Hawaii will serve the farmers in Hawaii in ongoing capacity without the threat of funding for these very important positions disappearing.

**SB-865-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/12/2025 10:21:28 AM

Testimony for HED on 3/12/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Denis O'Leary	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

West Hawaii's farmers need access to the vital, expert assistance provided by Andrea and Matt at the Extension Service, if the agricultural identity of our region is to be sustained.

Kona coffee is world famous and our local tropical fruit evokes the magic of Hawaii to all who experience it. Please give our growers this essential support by passing this measure.

Thank you